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Religion reporters given more scope in dailies

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — "Religion pages used to be the ghetto pages," says Pauline Finch-Durichen, a staff writer for the *Record*, a Kitchener-Waterloo daily. But recently, some religion stories have been breaking into other sections of the paper. It's all part of a growing trend among Canada's newspapers to give more space to faith stories.

The *Record* has a weekly Faith Page (actually two pages) that appears on Saturdays. Finch-Durichen is responsible for this page, which usually features a local feature story and a columnist, as well as church ads.

A local retired United Church minister has been writing a weekly column for almost 20 years. "He covers every faith group," says Finch-Durichen. She considers him "very liberal and open-minded" and "very controversial."

Finch-Durichen tries to get balanced coverage of different faith communities, but notes, "I can get Christians anytime I want. They're culturally dominant."

Recently, she has written stories about marginalized Jews and native spirituality. She notes that "the aboriginal community is fairly new at seeing themselves among the faith groups."

But the local Muslim community is quite active and outspoken.

Finch-Durichen says her biggest challenge is gaining the trust of faith groups which have been either ignored or "trashed" in the press.

The *Record* has a circulation of about 80,000, and is part of the Southam group. One result of this is that Finch-Durichen's stories are often printed in other Southam papers.

Besides her reporting work, Finch-Durichen is a lay-assistant at a local Evangelical Lutheran church. "Being a Lutheran gives a pragmatic outlook on what I do," she observes.

Focus on news

Farther west, the *Calgary Herald* also features a weekly religion section, which tends to

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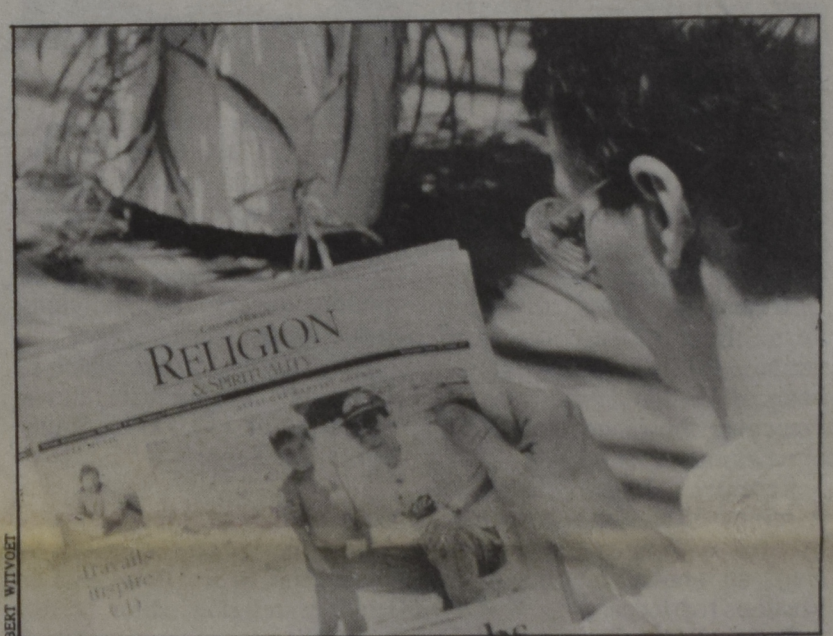
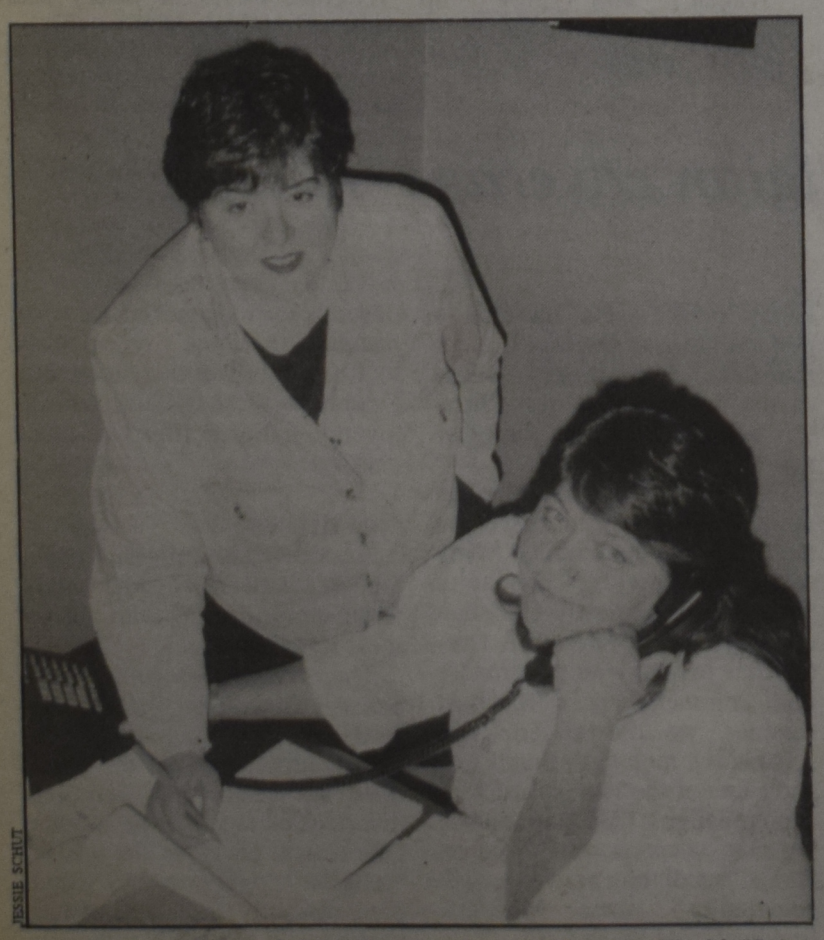


BEKT WITVOET

A reader peruses the religion pages of the Calgary Herald.

Healing touch comes through a hotline



JESSIE SCHUT

Cheryl Shea (l.) and Dorothy Wright work with World Vision Canada's new hotline for aboriginal victims of abuse

Jessie Schut

EDMONTON — World Vision Canada, well-known for working in crisis situations overseas, recently launched a project that touches closer to home. On May 3 it opened a nation-wide toll-free referral line for aboriginal victims of abuse.

The hotline operates out of the Mars Hill Counselling Centre in Edmonton. Cheryl Shea, director of the centre, says the hotline is an answer to her prayer to be involved in reconciliation between aboriginal and non-native citizens.

"I see the native people as the heart of Canada," she says "but the heart is wounded. Now we've got an opportunity to help with the healing."

The initiative was developed by the Native Christian Networking Project, part of World Vision's Aboriginal Programs (see sidebar, next page). Tim Stime, co-ordinator of the project, became acutely aware of the problems caused by abuse as he worked on a native Bible translation project in Quebec.

"One of the guys working with me had been abused by a priest," he says. "His story was just a drop in the bucket — it's an enormous problem right across Canada, and the results in the native community have been disastrous."

Historical factors

The government's Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People cites statistics that are "unacceptable in a country that the United Nations rates as the best place in the world to live." Life expectancy is lower, illness is more common, and human problems from family violence to alcohol abuse are more common, too.

In one questionnaire at a woman's native shelter, 24 per cent of respondents said they knew of deaths as a result of aboriginal family violence, and 54 per cent knew of cases where women sustained injuries in incidents of family violence, but were too fearful or ashamed to seek medical attention.

Sociologists point to a variety of factors that have led to the present situation.

John Stellingwerff, director of the Edmonton Native Healing Centre, suggests historical factors may have played a role, as native people were systematically stripped of their lands, their culture, and their voices. "When you live in poverty and oppression, when you lose your culture and are addicted to drugs and alcohol, you take it out on the most vulnerable, the women and the children," he says, adding that in some communities, abuse

See **ABUSE** *p. 3...*

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News

Reporters aim for balanced coverage of faith groups

... *continued from page 1*

be two or three pages per week, including ads, says religion editor Gordon Legge.

"On the whole, the *Herald* is very supportive of religion writers," says Legge. "I think there's been a growing recognition by the *Calgary Herald* that our readers are interested in religion."

In terms of coverage, Legge says his paper has "gotten away from opinion pieces and focuses more on news.... Our religion coverage is pretty wide-ranging in terms of faith."

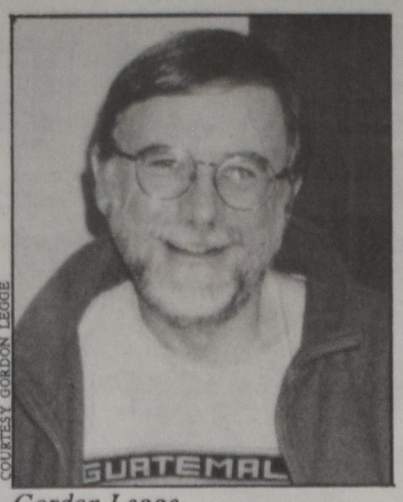
Legge estimates there are more than 30,000 Muslims in Calgary, as many as 10,000 Sikhs, 15,000 Hindus and 7,000 Jews, as well as a Buddhist community. There are also more than 400 Christian churches.

Because of this diversity, Legge tries to give coverage to various faith groups. But he notes, "We don't proportion it. We cover things on their merit or news value."

Recently, Legge balanced coverage of Easter celebrations by also running a story about Hajj: an annual pilgrimage of Muslims to Mecca.

Religion news in the *Herald* tends to focus on local or provincial issues, such as the anti-VLT campaign.

Some religion stories appear in other sections of the paper,



COURTESY GORDON LEGGE

Gordon Legge

more so than two years ago, says Legge. But there are few letters to the editor about religion, except recently about the Delwin Vriend case. Occasionally, the paper publishes opinion pieces by religious leaders on the "op-ed" page.

The *Calgary Herald*, which is also owned by Southam, has a circulation of 150,000 on Saturdays, says Legge.

No great diversity

On the East Coast, in Fredericton, N.B., Brookee LaPointe is religion editor of the *Daily Gleaner*, a paper with a circulation of 30,000 in the region around Fredericton. The paper is owned by the Irving family, better known for its large-scale oil and lumber businesses on the East Coast.

But the owners do not affect the paper's religion coverage, says LaPointe. Generally, the paper has had consistent coverage of religion and is improving in this area, she believes.

Usually, the *Gleaner* has two religion pages, but sometimes three or four, which appear in the Saturday edition. Each week there is one column written by a local Anglican bishop who has written for the newspaper for years. "He's very topical about things going on that week," says LaPointe. Although the bishop deals with ecumenical issues, some critics say his column has "a very Anglican slant," says LaPointe.

Fredericton does not have a particularly diverse faith community. LaPointe often hears from local churches or the synagogue, but other faith groups "aren't contacting us," she says.

But LaPointe tries to give balanced coverage to different faith groups, keeping in mind the interests of readers. One recent story focused on how to bridge the Jewish and Christian communities and another dealt with Holocaust memorial services. Religion news coverage tends to be local, with a few international stories.

Few people write letters to the *Gleaner* editor about religion, except to make positive comments about religion coverage,

COURTESY KELLY TEAHEN

Kelly Teahen

observes LaPointe. However, recent statements by United Church of Canada moderator Bill Phipps "did spark a huge amount of letters."

Religion and life

The *London Free Press* has no religion editor, but Kelly Teahen is editor of the weekly "Forum," which regularly features an opinion piece with a religious focus. Teahen tries to get a wide variety of religious leaders to write these opinion pieces.

"The community is still largely Christian, but London is a large Muslim centre," she notes. "We've had quite a large migration pattern from Lebanon." There is also a local Bahai group which submitted an opinion piece recently.

Teahen, who grew up Catholic, also wants a variety of Christian groups to be represented in the paper. "I don't want it to be all fundamental or all evangelical," she says.

To keep tabs on religious communities, Teahen peruses copies of about 20 religious publications, including *Christian Courier*, and also keeps a calendar of religious feast days. Recently, she asked a priest to write a piece about how several religions have a "feast before the famine," that is, a feast just before a time of fasting (as, for example, in the traditional Catholic Shrove Tuesday pancake feast before partial fasting during Lent).

Sometimes, someone will respond to an opinion piece with another point of view. But Teahen stresses that she does not agree with "a ping-pong game of Scripture." She prefers writers to deal with how religion relates to life experience rather than quoting a lot of Scripture as proof of their point of view.

As with other dailies, the *Free Press*'s religion coverage appears on Saturdays, along with church ads. Besides the columns, the weekend Forum section runs a religion feature-story several times a year, she adds. The paper covers London and the surrounding area, with a Saturday circulation of 135,000.

Letters to the editor often deal with religious matters, Teahen asserts. "There's no shyness on religious issues or issues with ethical implications."

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Newspaper religion coverage 'terrible': reporter

Alan Doerksen

VICTORIA — Religion coverage in daily newspapers needs a lot of improvement, says Ian Dutton, religion reporter for the Victoria *Times-Colonist*.

"I think newspapers do a terrible job of religion coverage," asserts Dutton. Even though many more people in B.C. regularly go to a place of worship than those who attend sports events, religion gets scant coverage in papers such as his, admits Dutton.

"It's stayed about the same. It's a token amount.... I think not enough attention is paid to religion. It's an important issue in people's lives," says Dutton.

Each Saturday the *Times-Colonist* has one religion page, which Dutton puts together. Every other week, there is a column by a United Church minister, who writes about events connected to the Christian calendar, spiritual topics or news events.

Dutton often writes religious news stories, mostly focussed on the local faith community. Many stories deal with Christianity "because it's a mostly Christian community," he says. But Dutton tries to deal with the broader faith community as well. "Last summer, we did a series on spirituality, including Buddhists, and some of the less mainstream denominations like Unitarians." He also observes that Victoria has a "small but active Jewish community," some Muslims, Buddhists and Sikhs.

What Dutton reports on depends on its significance. For instance, the Pope's recent visit to Cuba was worth a story, but Dutton says, "there's little room given to national affairs of churches."

Not diverse

Besides the religion page, Dutton's paper gets some letters to the editor dealing with mostly local religious issues.

The *Times-Colonist* is read across Vancouver Island but focusses mostly on Victoria, says Dutton. Usually, the paper does not reflect the religious diversity of the city, he admits. One reason he gives for this is: "religion reporters come predominantly from a Christian background" and are relatively ignorant of other religions.

Abuse among aboriginals has historic roots

... continued from page 1

is almost epidemic. Victims often become perpetrators themselves, thus continuing a vicious cycle.

Another factor, says Dorothy Wright, 37, is the history of the residential school. She describes herself as "the offspring of the effects of residential schools."

After the first residential school opened in 1849, almost every child who lived on a reserve was forced to leave home and live in government-funded, church-operated residential schools for 10 months of the year. Wright's mother attended a residential school from age five to age 18. She was never allowed to observe and experience what family structure was all about. She never learned how parents go about raising children.

JESSIE SCHUT

Dorothy Wright, who operates the referral line, knows the difference healing can make in a person's life because she has experienced it herself.

No boundaries

"It affected my childhood, my mother's childhood, and many, many more people that I know personally," says Wright.

"You see five or six native families living together in one house," she points out. "That's normal for them — there are no healthy boundaries established, and they don't understand that a girl shouldn't be sleeping with her [male] cousin, or a boy with his sister. Incest and sexual abuse is higher in native society than in any other culture."

Added to the lack of good family role-modeling is the well-documented horror of predatory abuse perpetrated at the hands of school authorities. The addictions that plague the native community, says Wright, are a by-product of abuse and neglect.

Needed intervention

The need to break the cycle and to heal is an absolute necessity if the native community is to become strong again. The government of Canada affirmed the need when it announced the establishment of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation to find a healing strategy to deal with the effects of residential schools.

Wright, who operates the referral line for World Vision, knows the difference healing can make in a person's life because she has experienced it herself. Five years ago she was a single mother with three children aged seven to 11. She was strung out on drugs and alcohol and desperate to find relief for the pain of abuse. She knew that if she didn't find a way to change, her children were doomed to experience the same things. She cried out to God and he came into her life.

But becoming a Christian and "drying out" didn't solve the gnawing agony she felt inside. Neither did the years of Bible school which she attended, although "being in the Word" strengthened her and prepared her for the hard work she still had to do to deal with her past.

Finally, she found herself at Mars Hill, and joined every group that it offered. "Well, it transformed my life!" she says. "Now I'm walking in freedom. God has used Mars Hill and the programs, and I can see the difference in myself and in my family. It's very exciting, because now I can tell others, 'It's worked for me.'"

Instead of following the old patterns, Wright wants to share her newfound freedom with the rest of her family and begin a new tradition.

A healthier country

What counselling — especially good Christian counselling — does, says Shea, is heal the heart. "The goal is not to eliminate all the pain, because in this life that will never happen," she says. "But our goal in growing through counselling is to love God and to love others better — and since that's really the Great Commandment, it's got to be successful." Since the abuse results in wounded hearts, the solution is to turn wounded hearts toward God.

World Vision's Terry LeBlanc, manager of Aboriginal Programs, says the hotline will help callers to find the counselling they need. The Native Christian Networking Project is preparing a resource directory of agencies and counsellors across the country who are able to deal with abuse issues and help with the healing. Funding for the program, which is in a three-month trial period, has been provided by a variety of sponsors, the biggest of which is the Anglican church.

"I feel honored that God has put us here to be part of not just healing individuals, but through this to heal our country," says Shea. "The more people are healed of their wounds, the better chance there is that we can face the bigger issues that are in this country."

Country-wide network aids natives

Jessie Schut

EDMONTON — Three years ago, says Terry LeBlanc, manager of aboriginal programs for World Vision, a study commissioned by the organization revealed that local Canadian needs for relief and development were similar to those in countries overseas. After consultation with native Canadians, five different areas have been targeted for development initiatives:

- education and advocacy;
- leadership support and development;
- practical community-based projects;
- reconciliation;
- and family support.

Terry Le Blanc says that all of the initiatives are developed only in consultation with aboriginal leaders.

The Native Christian Networking Project falls under the banner of education and advocacy. It set out to co-ordinate and list all the aboriginal ministry programs that were happening across Canada. Organizers quickly realized that there was tremendous need for counselling resources to deal with abuse issues.

The answer to this need was two-fold: the reworking of an awareness-raising booklet, and the referral line for aboriginal victims of abuse.

The booklet, "When Trust is Lost" by Dan Allender, explains how sexual abuse affects victims, and how healing can happen. "We put it into an ESL [English as a second language] format and added illustrations," says project co-ordinator Stime. The network also realized that when people discover they need help, there should be information about where to get that help. That's how the referral line came to be.

Each booklet prints the referral line number prominently on its cover: 1-888-600-5464 (in Edmonton, the number is 433-6286). The booklets will be widely distributed to native organizations across the country.

While the number is only available in Canada right now, the U.S. may wish to use the concept as a model for its own development, Stime believes.

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Editorial

Set your mind on heavenly trees

A man dropped into the office the other day wanting to clean our carpets. He noticed that we publish a paper called *Christian Courier*. Actually, he had seen our name on the sign outside but thought that we ran a courier service from a Christian perspective. I disabused him of that notion and gave him a few copies of CC to take home.

He came back the next day inquiring further about the carpet. I asked him if he had read some of the articles in the issues I had given him. He smiled and said he had. I asked him what he thought of it. He smiled again, then hemmed and hawed. "It was alright," he finally said. We talked about what he had read.

That upward look

He found Bert Hielema's column a little radical. He shouldn't have written about a penis, he said. He believed that our minds should be on heavenly things. "Set your mind on heavenly things, where Christ sits, for you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God,'" he said, and added: "Colossians 3:2 and 3."

I told him that I saw no conflict between talking frankly about our bodily parts and setting our minds on heavenly things. The Colossians text tells us to be dead to sin and to make sure that our minds are not in the gutter.

"It means that we should spend a lot of time in prayer and meditation," he countered.

I said, yes, we should indeed spend time with the Lord but that setting our minds on heavenly things included doing our work on earth according to God's will. Neither one of us was getting argumentative. It was a lighthearted banter back and forth.

He mentioned how the Apostle John spent much time in a vision. I was of the opinion that most of us should leave that kind of heavenly vision business to people like John and focus on our earthly tasks. I added that Martin Luther had said that if he knew that Christ was coming back tomorrow he would plant a tree today.

"But we know that Martin Luther had a long way to go in becoming righteous."

"Don't we all?" I answered. "Don't *you* have a long way to go?"

"We are all sinners," he acknowledged. "'There is none righteous. No, not one,' Romans 3:10. Nevertheless, we are asked to keep our minds on heavenly things."

"And on trees," I replied.

Trees in Jerusalem

"But Scripture tells us that if we are righteous we shall be like trees planted by rivers that bring forth fruit in its season. Psalm 1:3."

"That's a literary device. We are *like* trees, but that doesn't mean we *are* trees."

"But physical things teach us about spiritual things," he said.

"Yes, but physical things have a greater function than to serve as illustrations. Trees are creatures that require our attention because they are trees. Trees are God's creatures. We need to look after them well."

"Do you think of Jerusalem as your mother?" He wanted to know.

"Not really."

"Scripture tells us that Jerusalem is our mother. 'But Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.' Galatians 4:26."

"Okay. But what's the point?"

"God will make it clear to you what the point is."

"But what is *your* point in telling me this?"

Another Scripture passage followed. I don't remember the passage.

"I think we're talking past each other," I finally said, laughing. Actually, he embraced me with a "Praise the Lord" when I told him that I believed all the texts he had quoted. But I felt as if we had embraced across a chasm.

In a way I regretted that I had not been able to come up quickly with Bible texts myself, because that seems to lend more authority to one's position. But then I would have played the game according to his rules. My knowledge of the Bible is similar to my knowledge of my wife: I cannot tell you her weight and her height and when she graduated from elementary school, but I do know that, among other things, she likes nature and camping and that she hates it when I walk into the house with dirty shoes.

I also do make it my business to have the mind of Christ and to discern spirits. But I don't read the Bible as a dictionary of quotations. It's a book of stories and songs and teachings for me — all of which tell the grand story of God's love for us through Christ. But this grand story resists being broken into piecemeal truths. And, equally important, it's a story of "incarnational truth," i.e. grace moves through and is incorporated into our earthly existence.

I have to be careful, though, not to dismiss this man's concern for being in touch with God's throne in heaven. It's so easy to consider my own position as complete. As a friend of mine points out, how come neo-Calvinists have such a hard time bridging the gap between these two somewhat extreme positions? Why are we losing young adults to the more evangelistic stream of Christianity? Are we not pious enough (in the biblical sense of the term)? Ah, fodder for another editorial or a reader's response.

Looking at the context

He wants to come back some time and talk some more. I will if he wants to, but I'm not that eager. Perhaps it would be more fruitful if we sat down and looked at the whole of Colossians 3, see how the rules for holy living are followed by rules for Christian households, and that verse 23 reads: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not men," and that chapter 4 begins with economic advice: "Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair."

If the discussion follows the pattern of our previous talk, I'm less inclined to have another go at it. I felt as if I had been stoned by texts. Had it really been a discussion? The dualism of Nature and Grace is alive and well, I thought. Nature is subordinate to Grace. Trees serve as illustrations for the gospel.

But perhaps we are guilty of other dualisms, the ones you don't account for in philosophies. The dualism of preaching the message "Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven" but living the gospel of materialism, judgmentalism or institutionalism. **BW**

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CHRISTIAN COURIER STAFF
Editor: Bert Witvoet **cceditor@aol.com**
Publisher: Stan de Jong **ccjournal@aol.com**
Associate Editor: Marian Van Til **cceditor2@aol.com**
Reporter, Layout: Alan Doerksen **ccjournal@aol.com**
Circulation Manager: Grace Bowman **ccsubscrip@aol.com**
Advertising, Layout: Ingrid Torn **ccadverts@aol.com**

REGIONAL REPORTERS:
Jeff Hoogendoorn, Victoria; James Kwantes, Vancouver; Cindy Bruin, Calgary; Gordon Legge, Calgary; Jane Ouwehand, Agassiz, B.C.; Jessie Schut, Edmonton; Valerie Walker, Halifax; Robert VanderVennen, Toronto

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Tel: (905) 682-8311;
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E-mail: cceditor@aol.com

Gays and lesbians deserve better

I found the editorial "The popular notion of a progressive libertarian Jesus" (CC, April 24) to be intriguing, though I disagree with the framework used in the discussion. The people in the editorial who supported gay relationships portrayed Christ as being a "left-wing" liberator. The conservative, supposedly "right-wing" church leaders who opposed gay relationships were portrayed as being pharisaic and legalistic.

My own experience as a gay Christian tells me that this scenario is too simplistic, since I know many Christians who have changed their stance on the issue of homosexuality even though they remain deeply conservative on other church issues. The terms "pharisaic" and "legalistic", as I understand them, can apply to people of *any* political persuasion so long as they blindly support rules or policies which have long lost their original purpose and have become invalid or meaningless.

With this definition in mind I would humbly suggest that people who oppose gay relationships today, basing their support on the *Synod of 1973*, cannot help but be considered to be pharisaic and legalistic.

Not a disorder

I believe it is virtually impossible to truly support any section of *Synod '73* today without standing in direct opposition to some other section of the same document. For example, we are told that "It is the duty of pastors to be informed about the condition of homosexuality... and [to] dispel the prejudices under which [gays and lesbians] suffer" (633). Pastors who take this duty seriously and consult any of the national medical associations for advice will learn that according to the conclusions of modern research, homosexuality is not a mental disorder.

According to the American Psychological Association, "Homosexuality is not a mental disorder and the APA opposes all portrayals of lesbians, gay and bisexual people as mentally ill and in need of treatment due to their sexual orientation."

The organization "urges all mental health professionals to take the lead in removing the stigma of mental illness that has long been associated with homosexual orientation" (Council of Representatives).

However, pastors cannot share this information with their congregations without contradicting all of the medical information within *Synod '73* itself, which states that homosexuality is indeed a serious psychological disorder (624), and that "the first responsibility for the homosexual is to exhaust the possibility of sexual reorientation through all available means" (627).

Pharisaic route

Should pastors encourage gay teenagers to seek help from groups like Exodus International whose pamphlets describe homosexuality as a "demonic hold of perversion that grasps our minds" and "an unending cycle of bondage that repeats itself in recruiting others"?

Or should they provide gay teens with the position statement of the medical associations at the national level which have concluded that the claims of these groups are fraudulent, that "reparative" therapy constitutes "a misuse and abuse of psychiatry that deserves professional sanction," and that trying to change one's sexual orientation can lead to "severe emotional damage"?

This is only a brief summary of the confusion and contradiction caused by the discredited medical information contained within *Synod '73*. I believe that the only way that pastors can support this outdated document today and escape from dealing with all the contradictions is to take the pharisaic and legalistic route. Whenever they are approached on the subject of homosexuality, they simply respond, "Our church has a clear position on the topic; here are the rules."

I believe that gays and lesbians in the church today deserve better.

Don Baxter
Toronto

Enjoys Hielema's honest prose

I'm not sure I would have written as much about male genetalia as Bert Hielema did in the May 8 issue (an issue which just might go down in CC history as the "Penis Issue") but that's probably because I don't have the ... er ... nerve Bert Hielema has. I certainly wasn't bothered by what he wrote. As a matter of fact, I found it all very interesting — which is par for the course when dealing with Bert Hielema's prose.

I'm a big fan of Bert's, and I know there are many others out there in CC land who are as well. Hielema writes with passion, honesty and sincerity, and he writes out of sheer interest in the subject, which is why many CC readers *weren't* bothered by what he wrote in that issue. Because he addresses things in a clinical manner, he wasn't crude in that column. He was simply making a point about how wacky some people are.

And I'd bet that every male reader who *was* irritated by the "11.5 cm-14 cm" line spent a few seconds wondering if they themselves fit into that bracket. I hope people will remember that Hielema made mention of these anatomical facts in his attack on the media's fetish with discussing sexual matters.

Dirk Schouten
Kap'yong, South Korea

Live up to your name

The information about the size of a man's penis is not very funny. It is very disgusting and not at all necessary. Our newspapers and magazines are already full of this junk. Your paper is called *Christian Courier*; it has Christ's name in it. Please do not conform to the world because we are not part of it. Think about it! You may cancel my subscription with regrets.

Marilyn Sjaarda
Goderich, Ont.

A gripping flashback

Ed Top

I was okay in the parking lot and felt calm in the elevator. Getting the nurse's permission seemed normal enough, even though it was past visiting hours, an hour before midnight.

But I didn't expect to see him that way. I had seen my father in many circumstances, always in control, organized and determined. But now, all those tubes, flashing monitors, beeping noises, surrounded by nonchalant people. Then seeing his ashen face, hardly discernable; the plastics traversing over his inert body stunned me, shook me. The beaming nurse assured me that all had gone "very well." The triple by-pass surgery had been successful.

I held his hand, plastic tubes barring a real grip.

Dad stirred; anticipating, the radiant nurse applied a little more morphine. She told him his son was here and everything was fine.

He gently pressed my hand once through the paraphernalia, then a second time, and slowly, a third.

I cried. If the delicate operation would have gone the other way there would have been no return squeeze. A lifeless hand is all I would have held. I couldn't control the tears, and he squeezed again.

I then remembered the last time we had held hands. I was six or seven years old sitting in the front pew of the Fruitland Christian Reformed Church. Dad was the 'evening organist' in those days and he would always leave the bench to listen to the sermon. Sitting beside me, he'd sneak me a King peppermint and then hold my hand until my little palm grew so hot I had to pull away.

That had been the last time. Too long.

Now that same hand had squeezed mine again, and I simply cried.

And then thanked God for another chance.

Ed Top lives in Cobourg, Ont. He misses his former journalism days.

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Education

EFC Task force on education given permanent status as a commission

TORONTO (EFC) — After four years as a think tank on education issues, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada's (EFC) Task Force on Education has been given permanent status as a full-fledged commission.

Moving from a task force to full commission status will improve EFC's ability to help evangelicals at the grassroots level mobilize on key education issues such as funding for faith-based schools, curriculum development and building healthy school communities, said commission chair Dr. Glenn Smith.

Constructive role

"Christians have a great interest in the many changes happening within our various education systems," said Smith. "The commission will need to work hard in the years ahead to help parents, educators and other concerned Christians play a constructive role in addressing outstanding educational issues."

Since 1994, the commission has produced a number of resources such as *Diversity and Faithfulness: Reflections for Christian Teachers on Plurality and Pluralism in Canada* and has addressed key issues regarding education structuring in Quebec and Newfoundland.

Smith would like to see the commission build on its past work by increasing its networking and partnerships with groups such as the Ontario Multi-faith Coalition for Equity in Education (OMCEE) and Protestants in Partnership on Education in Quebec.

A study guide on the *Diversity and Faithfulness* booklet will be available soon and two upcoming publications — *Myths of Pluralism* and *A Guide to Religion and Values in Public Schools* — are currently being developed by the commission for publication later this year.

Agriculture

Tax technology at work

Elbert van Donkersgoed

The recent Ontario budget barely mentions agriculture, but that's okay.

The farming part of the economy is stable and solid and faces no immediate risks. In fact, some of the fundamentals could hardly be more favorable. Interest rates are low and inflation non-existent. And then there is the low dollar; it helps agriculture, like much of our economy, become even more export oriented.

High export rate

Ontario now exports almost half of our gross domestic product — 45.8 per cent of our GDP is consumed by others and 90 per cent of those exports are U.S. bound. Now you know where all those trucks on the 401 are headed. Ask Canadian men what their profession is; the biggest group will tell you — trucking.

For our Calendar of Events, please turn to page 19

Keep the fundamentals stable and strong and agriculture can keep trucking along.

Ontario is on track to ending the pattern of borrowing to pay interest on borrowed money. The Conservatives are budgeting for an operating surplus of 5.6 billion — a surplus that can be used to pay interest. The trouble is, the interest bill is over 9 billion and growing. The total debt stands at 105 billion and is projected to skyrocket to 115 before we stop borrowing to pay interest.

Ontario's economy is so big that even small changes hit government finances hard. The budget is counting on a solid 3.5 per cent growth in GDP. A one per cent decrease in GDP reduces government income by one billion every two years. Any souring of the economy could impede elimination of the deficit.

Specifically for agriculture, there's stability for the work of Ontario's Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs. The retail tax rebate is being extended. For the rural affairs part of the OMAFRA budget there's more money for jobs, especially for rural youth.

I see this budget as positive for Ontario agriculture and on some of the bigger economic issues of our day.

Fundamental shift

Here's one.

For decades we've been switching from people work to technology work to get production done to meet consumer demand. The budget, for example, takes pains to tout the fact that machinery investment in Ontario — a good portion of it agricultural — went up to 25.5 per cent in the past three years. Meanwhile governments continue to ratchet higher the taxes on people work.

The income tax cut is a necessary response to the shrinking role of people work in the economy. There's an urgent need to untax lower incomes and put the tax burden on the growing parts of the economy.

That takes a paradigm shift for all of us. Economic growth is increasingly linked to the work done by technology. Are we ready to tax technology work instead of people work?

If governments are to create access to health care, education and all those other services we expect, there is no alternative.

Elbert van Donkersgoed is executive director of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario and publisher of Earthkeeping Ontario.

Little things

Pedagogeries

Alyce Oosterhuis

In our family, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day and Father's Day are traditionally celebrated with very little emotional hype. We usually mark such events with an occasional bouquet of flowers and a special family dinner, but no breakfasts in bed, or Sunday brunches at a posh restaurant.

Out of principle we refuse to be drawn into the commercialized exploitation of our guilt and affection towards our "significant others" or parents. For us, every day provides an opportunity to say "I love you," and very few days pass without that expression being heard in our home.

However, this year as Mother's Day recedes into distant memory, I cannot help but think that, although principles provide us rules and a framework for living, they do not sparkle and surprise in little ways that add spice and glow to the day's events.

For many of us it is the little things that make the difference between just being and being appreciated. When our children started their schooling, we thought that we would initiate a tradition that was observed in some other cultures.

On the first day of school, we gave them a bouquet of flowers to present to the teacher as a token of appreciation for the year to come. At the conclusion of the school year we went shopping for a special teacher's gift with which to end the year.

By the time our children were in the upper elementary grades they refused to bring flowers on Day 1, and in June they felt that their teachers would not want another mug or statuette to clutter desks. It had also become "uncool" to give tangible evidence of appreciation.

Learning small thank yous

Thanks to our familial emphasis on the little tangibles of appreciation, our children now go "all out" when it comes to a real gift-giving occasion. One girlfriend has a star named after her; another friend is the proud owner of a gold necklace; I treasure a tall, musical nutcracker given one Christmas; our CD collection has been added to substantially by our children.

These are the gifts that were given on the days that our family has designated as important markers in our lives: birthdays and Christmas. Adoption days and Easter tend to be celebrated in other ways. But what we have not taught our children very well is how to say "thank you" in seemingly insignificant ways: a phone call, a card, a letter, a note.

Ironically, it is in school that our children are frequently taught to say "thank you." Who has not been in a class in which a card of appreciation was constructed to thank a visiting guest? And how many strawberry teas have not been scheduled in schools to thank the volunteers?

Need for continuity

I say "ironically" because in the place where I wanted our children to give specific indications of thanks, i.e., the school, our children soon felt it was "uncool." But maybe it is not so much an irony as an example of the need for home and school continuity.

If the home does not stress the "little things" then, regardless of how many thank you teas or class cards, the school cannot make a lasting difference. Formalized thank yous are mandated by teachers, and once the school doors close behind the student, these formalities disappear, that is, unless they are also important in the home environment.

It makes one stop and think about other kinds of home and school continuities or potential discontinuities: expressions of faith or not; a love of learning or wealth; a desire to be of service or being self-important; a competitive spirit or co-operative sharing; a loving relationship or an abusive climate; individual success or communal caring.

Our children are tugged in diverse ways throughout their development. The least we can do is reflect on the discontinuities and contradictions they encounter and try to modify our own lives or the schools' policies to weave a coherent, sparkling, God-centred pattern in their lives.

Alyce Horzelenberg Oosterhuis teaches education and psychology at The King's University College Edmonton.

Video, Review

Secrets and Lies are cleansed by the truth

Marian Van Til

Secrets and Lies

Stars Timothy Spall, Brenda Blethyn, Marianne Jean-Baptiste, Phyllis Logan, Clair Rushbrook, Elizabeth Berrington. Written and directed by Mike Leigh.

British director Mike Leigh has an unorthodox method of making movies. The "normal" method involves shooting isolated scenes which actors have learned from a script (and almost always shot out of the sequence in which they will be seen). Now days, too, there's not much, if any, rehearsal; just shooting of takes, over and over until the director thinks a scene is right.

Leigh, however, starts with an idea, not a script, describes what he wants to his actors, and then spends months rehearsing with them as they gradually improvise the story he wants. Only then does he shoot, often filming a complete scene in one take, with the camera rolling uninterrupted for some minutes.

Though most viewers may not be specifically aware of this technique as they watch this film, the dividends the method reaps are palpable. It has a rare emotional authenticity. Transplant these people to North America and they could be people you know. They are *real*, and thus able to elicit complex reactions from us. That's what makes the film, which was nominated for five Oscars and was Best Picture at the Cannes Festival in 1996, so affecting.

Islands of isolation

Cynthia Purley (Brenda Blethyn) is a middle-aged working class British woman, a single mother since her teen years who seems to have spent her whole life on the edge of emotional breakdown. The soon-to-be-21-year-old daughter, Roxanne (Claire Rushbrook), resents her mother's emotional weakness, and her own need for her mother. The two women relate in a kind of tortuous psychological dance, the mother moving in close, desperately needing her daughter's affection, the daughter backing away to avoid a love she feels as suffocation. Each woman desires a closeness with the other, and indeed with others in their lives, but neither has any idea how to achieve it.

Cynthia's brother Maurice (Timothy Spall) is a professional photographer. Cynthia and Maurice have a kind of buried affection for each other, built through shared childhood adversity, but which they rarely express now. Nor do Cynthia and Maurice's wife, Monica (Phyllis Logan), get along.

The other characters are Jane, another sister; and Paul, Roxanne's on-again, off-again boyfriend/lover, whose affections Roxanne rebuffs in the same way she does her mother's.

The past emerges

Suddenly, into Cynthia's life comes the first-born daughter she gave up for adoption when she was 16. That's a decided surprise, but even more so the fact that her daughter is black. (The promiscuous teen-aged Cynthia, on becoming a mother, chose not to hold or even look at her child for fear she would want to keep her, and had assumed all these years that another man was her daughter's father.)

Her "new" daughter, Hortense (Marianne Jean-Baptiste), is an optometrist. She's a well-adjusted single woman who was brought up in a loving (black) family with two brothers who were her parents' biological sons. A few months after her adoptive mother dies, Hortense decides she would like to meet her birth mother.

Defies stereotypes

From beginning to end, virtually everything about this film defies stereotype. *Secrets and Lies* opens with a funeral. A long shot focuses on old gravestones while we hear, as from a distance, the singing of "How Great Thou Art."

Gradually the camera swings in a slow arc while moving ever closer, the music ever louder. By the hymn's third stanza we're right at the graveside, listening to these family members sing while, spade after spade, their loved one's coffin is covered with earth, the camera carefully probing the faces of first one person, then another.

Finally, the camera focuses on the woman we come to know as Hortense, and as the hymn ends we see a few tears trickle down her face. The scene then cuts to a wedding photography shoot at an opulent estate where we meet Maurice for the first time.

Members of the cast of Secrets and Lies*: a film with rare emotional authenticity.*

It is perhaps 10 or more minutes from the start of the film before we hear any character converse with another — which we find later, may be symbolic of this uncommunicative family. It takes many more minutes to get to know who each of these people is and how they know each other.

Despite that technique, the film never feels slow or dull. Leigh finds these people interesting and likes them despite their flaws. His great strength as a writer/director is that he is able to get us to feel the same.

Hortense is educated and articulate; and though we might expect her race to be a stumbling block for this family, it isn't, though of course they're very surprised she's black. Events at Hortense and Cynthia's first meeting, too, and when she is revealed at Roxanne's 21st birthday party as Cynthia's daughter, unfold in a manner that we might not expect.

Perhaps unexpectedly for a modern character study such as this, Leigh presents us with an optimistic ending, yet it's entirely believable.

The truth is liberating. When finally communicated, and communicated in love, it cleanses the Purleys of their secrets and lies, allowing them to contemplate a hopeful future.

Not only in Canada

SYDNEY, Australia (EP) — Rev. Fred Nile of Australia's Christian Democratic Party moved May 7 to ban liquor advertising and to forbid liquor companies from sponsoring athletic events. His bill, the Alcohol Beverages Advertising Prohibition Bill, has received support from members of parliament representing the Liberal Party, National Party, ALP and the Greens.

Nile said, "I know this is a controversial bill, as the liquor industry spends millions of dollars on the advertising of alcoholic beverages ... but I believe a caring society must protect our youth from the pressures of the powerful liquor industry. The harmful social, economic and health impact of alcohol consumption demands this Parliament act now on the issue of alcohol advertising."

Academic trend not appreciated

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (EP) — Yale University is renaming its Women's Studies program "Women's and Gender Studies," and reorganizing the program into three concentrations: gender studies; women's studies; and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender studies. The change has led to renewed criticism of what one conservative student called "specialized weirdo classes taking the place of foundational classes."

Look for next week's review of *Character*, the Dutch film which won this year's Oscar for Best Foreign Film.

For Golden Horseshoe-area readers,* Character *starts May 22 at the Broadway Cinema, 151 King William St., Hamilton.

Church

Pakistan orders another Christian hanged for blasphemy

Asawal Sardar

KARACHI (Compass Direct) — A Punjab district court sentenced Pakistani Christian Ayub Masih to death at the end of last month, declaring him guilty of blasphemy against the prophet Mohammed, charge which carries a mandatory death penalty.

Sahiwal Additional Sessions Court Judge Rana Abdul Ghaffar announced his April 27 judgment under strict security inside the walls of the Sahiwal Central Jail, reportedly in the absence of the accused's lawyer. In addition to the death penalty, the presiding judge ordered Masih to pay the state a fine of 100,000 rupees ($2,500 US).

No news reporters were allowed to witness the trial proceedings, which have been conducted inside the jail since last November's murder attempt against Masih outside a court hearing.

The accused Christian had pleaded not guilty to the charges. His Muslim defense lawyer Hanif Ahmad Dogar argued that the prosecution had relied on the accusers' verbal testimony alone, without providing any evidence to prove the allegation.

From Arifwala in the Pakpatan district of Punjab province, Masih has been imprisoned without bail since October 14, 1996, when a Muslim youth accused him at a local police station of making derogatory statements against the prophet of Islam.

To die for quoting Rushdie

According to Masih's lawyer, his client was convicted for allegedly telling a Muslim neighbor named Mohammad Akram, "If you want to know the truth about Islam, then read Salman Rushdie." Akram and other Muslim villagers from Chak No. 353-EB near Arifwala charged that by endorsing Rushdie's ideas in his novel *The Satanic Verses*, Masih had in fact slandered the prophet Mohammed.

However, Catholic Bishop of Faisalabad, John Joseph, continued to reject the charges against Masih as falsified claims "cooked up" to force the village's handful of 15 Christian families to abandon a local land dispute. "So Ayub Masih is to be hanged because he quoted Salman Rushdie," Bishop Joseph told Compass in a telephone interview today. "It's as simple as that."

A petition to appeal Masih's death sentence before the Lahore High Court has been registered. Human rights lawyer Asthma Jahangir, who has won appeals for several other Christians falsely accused of blasphemy, was asked to join Masih's defense counsel in arguing the case.

"I am suffering very much here in jail," Ayub Masih wrote to Compass after learning of an unsuccessful attempt to visit him in jail at the end of March. Masih wrote that he was being kept in an isolation cell six feet long and four feet wide, and that he had not been allowed to receive any mail sent to his prison address since last November.

More than a dozen Christians have been jailed on falsified blasphemy charges in Pakistan in the past seven years, with five killed while under custody. Ayub Masih is the fourth Christian defendant to be sentenced to death, with the other three later acquitted and forced to flee Pakistan for asylum abroad.

European court defends rights of Greek evangelicals

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — The European Court of Human Rights has upheld the rights of three Greek Protestants to evangelize. The three were Greek Air Force officers originally convicted of unlawful proselytism in 1992. The court declared the Greek government had violated the European Convention on Human Rights. The court, however, distinguished the military and civilian activities of the men, and did not rule against the law as such.

The Greek Orthodox Church dominates Greece, claiming more than 90 per cent of its population as members. The anti-proselytism laws of the country have inhibited Protestants from open evangelism. The Greek Evangelical Alliance has also supported the Greek Evangelical Church of Thessalonika, after government attempts to close it.

COSTA MANOS, MAGNUM

As part of a Greek Orthodox Easter celebration, these children tap red-dyed eggs together. One child says, "Christ is risen," and the other replies, "Truly, He is risen."

Common date for Easter wins growing support

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — Many major Christian communities are supporting efforts to have a common date for Easter. Currently, most Roman Catholics and Protestants calculate the date of Easter one way while most Orthodox calculate it another way. The difference in dating goes back to Pope Gregory XIII's calendar reform of 400 years ago.

At Alleppo, Syria, last year representatives of major traditions met and agreed on a new formula. It followed the formula of the Council of Nicea, A.D., 325, which said Easter should fall on the Sunday after the first vernal full moon.

The Alleppo proposal requires that this Sunday be determined by the most accurate astronomical calculations. The common date would begin in the year 2001, when both current methods of calculation fall on the same day. That year also has the advantage of being the first year of the new millennium, providing an opportunity for a fresh start for the churches.

The Vatican, the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch, the Russian Orthodox and others have all responded positively to the suggestion. These groups have also proposed that the issue be discussed at the World Council of Churches Assembly this year.

FROM COAST TO COAST

Back to God Hour: English Radio:

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Duncan - CKAY.....10:00am 1500
Burns Lake-CFLD.....9:15am 1400
Kitimat-CKTK.....8:30am 1230
Osoyoos-CJOR.....8:00am 1490
Penticton-CKOR.....8:00am 800
Port Alberni-CJAV.....7:00pm 1240
Prince George-CIRX...7:00am 94.3
Princeton-CHOR.....8:00am 1400
Smithers-CFBV.....9:15am 1230
Summerland-CHOR.....8:00am 1450
Vernon-CJIB.....9:30pm 940

QUEBEC

Montreal - CIQC.....7:30am 600

ALBERTA

Brooks-CIBQ.....8:00am 1340
Ft. McMurray-CJOK....8:30am 1230
High River-CHRB.....6:30pm 1280
Edmonton - CKER....11:00pm 101.9

SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan-CJSL.....8:00am 1280
Weyburn-CFSL.....8:00am 1190

MANITOBA

Altona-CFAM.....9:30am 950
Steinbach-CHSM.....9:30am 1250
Winnipeg-CKJS.....9:15am 810

ONTARIO

Atikokan-CFAK.....9:30am 1240
Chatham-CFCO.....6:30am 630
Fort Frances-CFOB.....9:30am 640
Guelph - CJOY.....8:30am 1460
Hamilton-CHAM.....7:30am 820
Kapuskasing-CKAP.....7:00am 580
Kingston-WLKC.....7:30am 100.7
Newmarket- CKDX.....9:30am 88.5
Oshawa-CKDO.....8:00am 1350
Owen Sound-CFOS.....10:30am 560
Pembroke-CHVR.....10:00am 96.7
Sarnia-CHOK.....7:30am 1070
Stratford-CJCS.....8:45am 1240
Windsor-CKLW.....8:30am 580
Wingham-CKNX.....10:30am 920
Woodstock-CKDK (fm)...8:00am 102.3

NEW BRUNSWICK

Saint John-CHSJ.....9:30am 700

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown-CFCY...7:00am 630

NOVA SCOTIA

Digby-CKDY.....6:00am 1420
Kentville-CKEN.....8:30am 1490
Middleton-CKAD.....8:30am 1350
New Glasgow-CKEC...7:30am 1320
Weymouth-CKDY.....8:30am 103.1
Windsor-CFAB.....8:30am 1450
Sydney-CJCB..... 8:00 am 1270

TELEVISION:
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THE BACK TO GOD HOUR

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South Africans debate pastors' membership in Afrikanerbond

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — Pastors of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in South Africa should not be members of the Afrikanerbond (Afrikaners' Alliance), says Nico Smith. Smith, a former professor of theology, wrote in a letter to a newspaper in early February that if the DRC wanted to be reliable, it must cast off the mantle of the Afrikanerbond.

Smith said the Afrikanerbond, formerly known as the Afrikaner Broederbond (Afrikaner Brotherhood), was still a confidential organization, even though they say they are no longer secret.

Murky past

Smith alleged that most church leaders and pastors were members of the alliance. He said church officers should resign from the group, because they formed a sub-group operating in church councils.

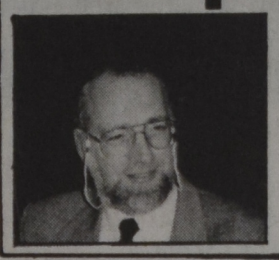
The DRC moderator, Freek Swanepoel, replied that the Afrikanerbond is now only an organization for the promotion of Afrikaans language and culture.

In remarks to the DRC newspaper, *Die Kerkbode*, he said pastors should be prepared to discuss their membership when there are any questions about that membership. Swanepoel added that membership in the Afrikanerbond and in the Broederkring (Brothers' Circle) were on the agenda of the discussions about church union with the mainly non-white Reformed churches.

James Buys, moderator of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, agreed with Smith that DRC pastors should resign from the Afrikanerbond. He also said the role of the Afrikanerbond should have been discussed in the DRC's history account, *Journey with Apartheid.*

Taking the snake by the tail

Chapter & Verse



Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
● Al Wolters

"Then the Lord said to him, What is that in your hand?' A staff,' he replied. The Lord said, Throw it on the ground.' Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it. Then the Lord said to him, Reach out your hand and take it by the tail.' So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand." (Exodus 4:4, NIV).

The context of this verse is the famous story of Moses at the burning bush, in which the Lord commissions Moses to lead his people out of their Egyptian bondage. But it is not Moses' finest hour.

In response to the Lord's momentous announcement that he is taking pity on his oppressed people, and that now, after some 400 years, he is finally about to rescue them and bring them to the promised land, Moses comes up with all kinds of excuses as to why the Lord should count him out. He is inadequate for the task (3:11); he doesn't know God's name (3:13); people won't believe him (4:1); he is not articulate enough (4:10); and anyway, he just doesn't want to be involved (4:13).

With amazing patience the Lord meets each of his objections, even revealing for the first time his personal name Yahweh, which, in effect, put Moses and the Israelites on a first-name basis with himself.

Our text is part of the Lord's patient response to Moses' third objection. The Lord gives Moses three signs to perform, in order to ensure that the Lord will be will believed. The first of these is the turning of his staff into a snake, and then back into a staff again. Apparently the snake was a poisonous one, because Moses is afraid of it and runs away. But the Lord tells him to overcome his fear and pick up the snake by the tail.

Where not to pick up a snake

It is likely that Moses was very reluctant to obey God's command. It is a hazardous undertaking at the best of times to pick up a poisonous snake with your hand, and if you do, you are best advised to pick it up by the neck (if snakes can be said to have necks), to avoid being bitten.

If you pick it up by the tail, the snake will turn back and bite you. But Moses, for all is reluctance to accept God's larger commission, does not dare to disobey this specific command. To his credit, he overcomes his fear and grasps the snake by the tail.

At this point the NIV translation enhances the drama of the situation. "So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake *and it turned back* ... into a staff." For a moment, it seems, the snake started to do exactly what Moses had feared it would do — turn back and bite him — but then the danger passes.

Unfortunately, the original Hebrew here does not have a word for "turn back" (it says simply "it became"), and I do not know whether the NIV translators deliberately chose their rendering to highlight the danger of snakebite. In any case, the translation as it stands brings out a point which is inherent in the situation.

A lesson about faith

Looked at in a broader perspective, this verse teaches us something about the nature of faith and obedience. To have faith is to trust God, to take him at his word, even in the face of common sense and prudential considerations. And obedience puts that faith into practice, even in defiance of reasonable calculations, and commits the outcome to God.

There is also something very comforting about the example of Moses, that great man of God, who was so much like us in our doubts and fears and our resistance to God's call, but who nevertheless was enabled by a patient God to take a first small step of practical faith.

Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ontario. He specializes in Old Testament studies.

Classic bulletin bloopers

+ Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles, and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

+ The outreach committee has enlisted 25 visitors to make calls on people who are not afflicted with any church.

+ The Ladies Bible Study will be held Thursday morning at 10. All ladies are invited to lunch in the Fellowship Hall after the B.S. is done.

+ The Pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday morning.

+ The congregation is asked to remain seated until the end of the recession.

+ Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Please use the back door.

+ Ushers will eat latecomers.

+ The third verse of "Blessed Assurance" will be sung without musical accomplishment.

+For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

+ The Rev. Merriwether spoke briefly, much to the delight of the audience.

+ The pastor will preach his farewell message, after which the choir will sing, "Break Forth Into Joy."

+ During the absence of our pastor, we enjoyed the rare privilege of hearing a good sermon when J.F. Stubbs supplied our pulpit.

+ Next Sunday Mrs. Vinson will be soloist for the morning service. The pastor will then speak on "It's a Terrible Experience."

+ Due to the Rector's illness, Wednesday's healing services will be discontinued until further notice.

+ Stewardship Offertory: "Jesus Paid It All."

+ The music for today's service was all composed by George Friedrich Handel in celebration of the 300th anniversary of his birth.

+ Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.

+ The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in the church basement on Friday at 7 p.m. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

+ The concert held in Fellowship Hall was a great success. Special thanks are due to the minister's daughter, who labored the whole evening at the piano, which as usual fell upon her.

+ Twenty-two members were present at the church meeting held at the home of Mrs. Marsha Crutchfield last evening. Mrs. Crutchfield and Mrs. Rankin sang a duet, "The Lord Knows Why."

+ A songfest was hell at the Methodist church Wednesday.

+ Today's Sermon: "How Much can a Man Drink?" with hymns from a full choir.

+ Hymn 43: "Great God, What Do I See Here?" Preacher: The Rev. Horace Blodgett. Hymn 47: "Hark! an Awful Voice is Sounding" (Amanda Simpson).

+ On a church bulletin during the minister's illness: God is Good: Dr. Hargreaves is better.

+ Potluck supper: prayer and medication to follow.

+ Don't let worry kill you off — let the church help.

+ Pastor is on vacation. Massages can be given to church secretary.

+ Eight new choir robes are currently needed, due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

+ The choir invites any member of the congregation who enjoys sinning to join the choir.

+ Please join us as we show our support for Amy and Alan in preparing for the girth of their first child.

+ Weight Watchers will meet at 7 p.m. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

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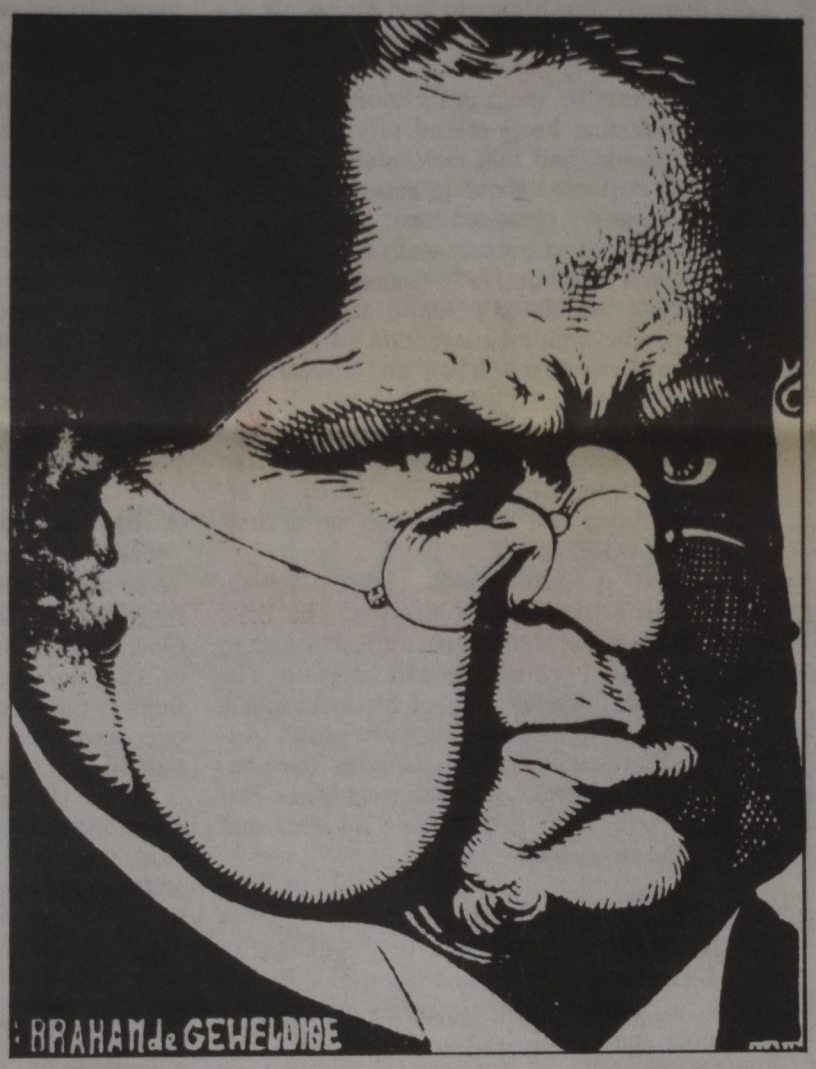
Books

You can't treat Kuyper as monolithic lump

Creating a Christian Worldview: Abraham Kuyper's Lectures on Calvinism

By Peter S. Heslam

Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Co., 1998. 270 pp.



Tony Kamphuis

I confess I own an Abraham Kuyper T-shirt. I bought it while a student at Calvin College, heady and dazed by my introduction to Kuyper's ideas as passed on by H. Evan Runner, Gordon Spykman and others. In many ways I, perhaps like other *Christian Courier* readers, was fairly familiar with Kuyper's formulations before reading this book. But looking at a familiar object from a different angle can provide helpful, and at times surprising, insights. That is the chief impression created by Peter Heslam's very readable treatment of Kuyper's *"Lectures on Calvinism."*

The subject of this book is the Kuyper of the years surrounding his delivery of the Stone Lectures.

For anyone who has heard of Kuyper and is perhaps intrigued by him but not all that familiar with his ideas, Heslam's book provides a solid introduction to Kuyper's powerful views on Christianity.

It rewards those less familiar with an easily accessible overview of some of Kuyper's strongest, most influential ideas. In particular, a lecture-by-lecture treatment of his "Stone Lectures" fleshes out many of his key concepts. His life and ideas are well explained and shaped into a meaningful whole in the course of the book. Yet this volume also rewards readers more intimately familiar with Kuyper.

A specific context

The characteristic that makes Heslam's book rewarding for this latter group is that it is a history book. While to some that conveys all the excitement of dry toast, in fact, an historical approach has a great deal to commend it. Other treatments of Kuyper have treated him as if he miraculously appeared from some other place, outside our world.

Which place that was believed to be depended on whether the author was an Abraham afficionado, or a Kuyper critic.

Heslam avoids both these errors. He is a sympathetic scholar (a relief, frankly, because academics can be quite cynical human beings), who is nonetheless interested in filling in the background as he sketches Kuyper into the historical picture in which he actually existed. To do this Heslam has nicely limited the focus of his study.

The subject of this book is the Kuyper of the years surrounding his delivery of the Stone Lectures. Heslam gives good rationale for limiting his investigation to this period. Kuyper, like any other person, changed over time. He reacted to different influences, lived through different experiences, recognized different challenges.

To treat "Kuyper's Thought" as one monolithic, static lump, as others have done, is to invite inaccuracies, especially when the subject has written as much as Kuyper did (Heslam cites 74 of his works) over such a long time span. Heslam neatly avoids this trap.

Instead we get a chance to discover which books Kuyper consulted as he sailed to America (p. 60 ff). We see whose ideas he used in formulating his ideas in English for an American audience (James Orr is singled out). We learn how he was received in the U.S. (the President himself, William McKinley, was pleased to receive him for a personal meeting). We get a sense of what his fellow scholars thought of his lectures (p. 251 ff). We see what kind of impression his presentation style created (a rather humorous anecdote is included on p. 65).

Compelling figure

Why did Kuyper structure the six lectures the way he did? Whom did he seem to be challenging? Do any inconsistencies reveal themselves under closer examination? These are the sorts of questions an historical treatment can take up, and which don't appear in theological or philosophical works.

Abraham Kuyper becomes a more interesting figure, a more compelling fellow Christian in the pages of this book.

The section near the end that addresses whether Kuyper was optimistic or pessimistic about the future of Calvinism as the last century ended, seemed to me to resonate especially well with those of us who anticipate the transition into the next.

Heslam's book is based on a very solid body of research, research undertaken in Dutch and English, research done in Europe and North America. This must have been challenging work because Kuyper was not only prolific but "impressionistic" in his writing. He wrote much but footnoted little. To discern who and what influenced him requires careful reading and considerable detective skills.

Heslam is honest when the connections he makes are tenuous, but bold enough to draw conclusions when he believes the evidence warrants them. All of this is well and good, but there is some criticism that ought to be brought forward.

Hasty publication

This book was hurried along the road to publication in order to be unveiled at the conference held this past February at Princeton University. That conference marked the centenary of Kuyper's original delivery of the Stone Lectures. The timing of this book's publication meant heightened publicity, but also leaves this reader thinking it under-edited.

In many places the book reads like a dissertation, which, in fact, it was, originally. Normally when a dissertation is developed into a book it achieves a higher state of polish. This book is too self-consciously constructed. It often says what it plans to do later, reminds us of what it has already done (and in which chapter) and generally is too repetitive of its key contentions.

It rewards those less familiar with an easily accessible overview of some of Kuyper's strongest, most influential ideas.

A certain amount of any of these traits can be a positive, but too much of all of them is a negative. That editorial comment aside, this book certainly will reward anyone who reads it and is recommended for Kuyper neophytes and older acquaintances alike.

Tony Kamphuis is a teacher at Smithville District Chr. High School, Smithville, Ont.

Our century may prefer soft-pencil sketch of Kuyper

Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader

Edited by James Bratt

Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998. 497 pp.

Peter Schuurman

Among the numerous pictures in this "Reader" there are two portraits of Kuyper. The first, which is also on the cover, is a soft-pencil sketch of Kuyper quietly writing at his desk while smoking a pipe. The second is a dark pen-and-ink caricature in which he holds a "not-to-be-fooled-with" scowl.

In the first you see the man of deep scholarship, weekly devotionals, fond farewells and lengthy love letters. In the second, entitled "*Abraham de Geweldige*" ("Abraham the Mighty") is pictured the orator, statesman, and "boundary defender." As Bratt puts it, Kuper was "a man of many paradoxes."

This "Reader" is a tribute to Kuyper's legacy, offering a wide collection of articles, speeches and sermons composed during his 50-year career as preacher, scholar, institution builder, editor and prime minister.

Remarkable figure

Bratt introduces the collection, citing Kuyper as "one of the most remarkable figures in the annals of Calvinism." He gives a helpful background to Kuyper's social context, education, theology and politics.

The rest of the 500-page volume contains 16 selections from Kuyper's bibliography of 223 works. They are grouped under three headings: Church and Theology, Politics and Society, and Culture and Education.

The goal, says Bratt, was to "allow a glimpse of Kuyper's whole meaning in compressed form," which he claims "show a remarkable mind wrestling with an uncertain world, perhaps too hungry for security, yet (or therefore?) innovative with questions and daring in solutions — thus providing Christian believers of later times an example for their own cultural engagements."

The translations from the Dutch are fresh, clear and readable. While very much a historical volume, Kuyper's writings read with surprising relevance — anticipating the postmodern, according to Bratt.

Kuyper's depth and breadth of insight are impressive, as he moves competently through theology, philosophy, science and politics. Kuyper boldly battled with the spirits of his age.

In the first selection, "Uniformity: The Curse of Modern Life," Kuyper rails against the homogenizing forces of modernity that he felt poisoned his era, erasing all God-given distinctions — minimizing gender differences, ruining architecture with endless symmetry and debasing the arts.

Related to this is a piece entitled "The Blurring of the Boundaries," in which Kuyper decries what he calls the pantheism of the 19th century, which washes away all contrasts and obscures all antitheses.

Finally, he shows scientific prowess in his nuanced yet sharp critique of what he calls "the even deadlier danger" of evolution.

He drew lines in the theological realm as well. In a sermon on Rev. 3:11b, he distinguishes true orthodoxy from false (knee-jerk) conservatism.

In another critical piece he eloquently unveils the shimmering "fantasy" of theological liberalism. And while Kuyper himself enthusiastically participated in a revival, his later reflection on the "Perfectionist" movement considered it superficial, boastful and bewitching.

Artful rhetoric

Kuyper never failed to distinguish himself from his adversaries with his artful and often provocative rhetoric, yet he also demonstrated a genuine respect for his rivals and a recognition of his own fallibility.

"One must speak from the depths and not from a pedestal," he said. "Especially in the battle against the theory of human perfection one is well advised to remain conscious of his own imperfection."

Kuyper shows a deep passion for Calvinism, country and the *kleine luiden* ("little people"). Calvinism, Kuyper insisted (immodestly), is the highest evolution of the Christian faith, and the Netherlands, next to America, is the finest expression of it. With chapters on common grace and sphere sovereignty (always laced, with a strong anti-clerical and anti-revolutionary spirit), the genius of this Reformed heritage is gradually filled out.

I wonder, reading now 100 years later, if his polemic against the encroaching powers of the "monstrous state" can be applied to a world threatened by a "monstrous market." There seems to be mileage for the concept of sphere sovereignty yet.

Kuyper was not an elitist with regards to his intended audience. He was wary of the confines of intellectualism as it stifled the "life" and "spirit" in which he saw grace primarily manifest. Politics, theology, culture — all of human enterprise — must arise out of and with the intuitive life of the *kleine luiden*.

This was the more difficult road: "The nature of my task bars me from the quiet retreat of scholarly research and drives me onto the treacherous terrain of public life where nettles and thorns wound at every step."

Bratt speaks freely of Kuyper's weaknesses. Before the selection on "The South African Crisis" Bratt makes mention of Kuyper's Calvinist patriarchy and his adoption of "the common European racism of the time." But this book comes primarily as a celebration of Kuyper's legacy, not critique.

Kuyper must have been a tremendous orator. The colorful prose reveals his charisma and fervor. While a singlemindedness that borders on authoritarianism is evident at times, that this man inspired eager students and rallied crowds to his cause is not difficult to imagine.

He transformed a country and sparked a neo-Calvinist "revival" that bears its mark all over the world today.

At the heart of it all stood the Word of God, a "cedar tree of spiritual authority." Says Kuyper, "With the naivete of the little child I have bowed my head in simple faith before that Scripture, have devoted my energies to its cause.... I will attempt to save the abundant cover of that cedar for our people, so that in the future they will not sit down in a scorching desert without shade."

The broader evangelical market, to which Bratt makes an appeal by referring to Kuyper as "an evangelical Christian with a difference," will, it is hoped, find this Reader to be an inspiration for a faith that is not just focussed on new life, but on a new "worldview" — a worldview not piecemeal and reactionary, but wholistic and proactive in its approach to culture.

The pearl within the shell

It will be interesting to see, however, if this publication captures the imagination of the younger crowd. Some may find it difficult to share his triumphal rallying cry on this side of the ocean, on this side of what was the bloodiest of centuries.

The confident declaration of the sovereign rule of God could be seasoned with the humility that marks the cross and the patient hope rooted in the expectation of Christ's glorious return (see Rom. 8:18-25 and Mark Noll's *Adding Cross to Crown*). Perhaps the pencil-sketched Kuyper is an appropriate book-cover for the Neo-Calvinism of the 21st century.

False conservatism, says Kuyper, wants to hold on to what is *as it is*. Genuine orthodoxy "exerts itself not for the shell but for the pearl within the shell."

As he urged standing in the midst of the desert of faith in his time, so we, too, echo in our desert-like era: "We must build again."

Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed chaplain at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont.

Testimony

Self-hatred Incorporated: My struggle with bulimia

Debra Rech

It always inspired me to read about people who overcome incredible handicaps or succeed despite trying circumstances. Mine is not such a story.

I owe my success, indeed my very life, to God and the small miracle he gave me three years ago, my baby girl.

I struggled through the depths of depression, an eating disorder, and prescription drug abuse since 1983. It began after a traumatic event when I was 24. The details don't really matter. Suffice it to say, that event shattered me and turned my life upside down for the next 12 years.

The only thing that kept me alive was my belief in God. Even though I hated him and felt he'd abandoned me, I knew in my heart that taking my life was wrong.

At that time I was the editor of a small newspaper in Atlantic County, New Jersey. I was a college graduate, had been valedictorian of my high school class and seemed to have the world by the tail. But in the course of one evening, that life was gone. I became extremely depressed, although no one had any idea. I've always had the ability to hide my feelings. I continued to go to work every day, but at night came home to practice a ritual of self-abuse that quickly escalated.

I took the pain I felt inside and rather than share it with someone, tried to run from it. I began to starve myself and exercise like a maniac for hours. Now I realize I was trying to focus on something I could control, my body, rather than face the out-of-control feelings I had inside.

I became bulimic shortly after that, weighing only between 70 and 89 pounds for many years. Over the next 12 years, I lost my writing job, married and divorced twice, became promiscuous and did things I never thought I was capable of doing. I think I broke every one of the Ten Commandments and then some.

I went through a series of jobs I hated — never able to hold a position for more than a year because I always got too sick from being so thin.

I was raised Christian, but had rebelled when I became a teenager and turned away from God. Yet I always knew he existed. And the guilt and shame I felt from doing the things I was doing only made me hurt worse and continue the self-abuse.

In the early 1990's I was in and out of mental institutions and rehab clinics trying to treat the eating disorder and drug problem that ruled my life. I couldn't work by then and was barely surviving. I was alone, miserable and felt hopeless. I tried to commit suicide three times. The only thing that kept me alive was my belief in God. Even though I hated him and felt he'd abandoned me, I knew in my heart that taking my life was wrong.

Still, I was addicted to pain and continued that cycle until I remarried in 1994. By then, many doctors told me I had destroyed my reproductive organs from the years of abuse. I could never have a child. That only caused me to hate myself more. My husband's love couldn't even stop me from slowly trying to kill myself by starving or binging and purging.

COURTESY DEBRA RECH

Debra Rech with her two daughters, Faith (age three) and Hope (age one).

A slap in the face

In September of 1994 I saw my doctor after being ill for weeks. He told me I was six weeks pregnant. I weighed 72 pounds. At that moment, it was as if God reached down from heaven and slapped me across the face — hard!

I decided then to stop feeling sorry for myself and take responsibility for another person's life. Many people (even some who said they were Christians) told me to get an abortion. They feared for my life. I refused.

I kept my faith and each day strengthened it. I prayed for the power I needed to gain enough weight to carry the baby to term. Nine months later, my miracle was born. We named her Faith, for obvious reasons.

I can't even begin to say how my life has changed. I'm not the person I was only four years ago. Faith brought the laughter back into my life. She helped me grow up and realize that no matter what I went through, God had good reason for it.

I now work once again as a writer and had my second daughter, Hope, just a year ago. We plan one more child, Charity or Christian if it's a boy. I felt totally happy and fulfilled. The eating disorder is a thing of the past and drugs have no place in my life. God gave me a second chance at life. And I haven't looked back once.

God worked a miracle for me. I take absolutely no credit for turning my life around. He deserves all the praise. Every time I look into Faith's eyes, I see him looking back at me — and smiling.

Every day I remember: "Whatever you ask for in prayer, with faith, you will receive." (Matt. 21:22).

Debra Rech is a writer who lives with her family in North Cape May, New Jersey.

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Being different

Learning with other handicapped children

Nancy Bennett

When I was first attending school, children didn't mix. At least not handicapped and so called "normal" children. We were kept cloaked from different kids, giving each other stares as we passed each other in the hallway. Different classes, different teachers, different needs.

> ***"I was the one who had been handicapped by my inability to see people as special individuals."***

And from this lack of knowing each other came the ignorance which bread schoolyard bullies.

I like to remember that I was never the one who taunted the kids who were different. But neither was I brave enough to stand up to the bullies. Deep down inside I was afraid of being labelled different myself.

When my first child was nearing three we moved to a house beside a park and as providence would have it, beside a very special school. It was called "The Child Development Centre" and it offered an interactive classroom. My daughter was invited to attend. But as I watched the special buses pulling in I wasn't anxious to send my daughter to meld with this group. I thought it was "specialized," that is, you had to have a handicap or something "wrong" with you to be there. That old fear of being different haunted me. I didn't want my daughter to be different.

But the excited cries from the yard, the waves from the children as they set out on yet another adventure and the fact it was just across the street (in shouting distance in case things went wrong!) compelled me to give it a try. So hand-in-hand, my daughter and I went to see what it could offer.

Unexpected blessings

Each classroom was set up in friendly, warm colors. The ratio of child to teacher was exceptionally low. And I could watch what went on every day from behind a two-way glass.

As much as my daughter learned, this was also a lesson for me, one that I will never forget. My daughter became more helpful and understanding as she worked with her new classmates. Some had physical handicaps. Others had psychological barriers. Others were so-called normal. But there were no labels given to these special children and all of them were just kids to my daughter.

She marvelled at the hearing aid her friend Samantha finally got and how Sam could speak so much better after that. She tried to learn to tie shoes, and when she became frustrated her new friend Jamie helped out. Jamie had fetal alcohol syndrome and difficulties with his hearing and sight. But he had struggled to learn to tie last year and was willing to share the secret of lacing with anyone who asked. Rory could spin wheelies in his chair and Megan read a special language called braille with her fingers.

Sometimes my daughter was envious of her new friends. Other times she was angry. When people teased or stared at her classmates she was the one who boldly confronted the bullies as I cringed deep down inside for her.

"My daughter became more helpful and understanding as she worked with her new class-mates. Some had physical handicaps. Others had psychological barriers. Others were so-called normal."

Who has the handicap?

As I watched my daughter through those years I came to the realization of what I had missed by not being allowed to meet those kids in the other class. I was the one who had been handicapped by my inability to see people as special individuals. If anyone had special needs it was I, in taking my blinders off — blinders placed there by my parents and a society which felt and still feels a need to segregate.

My mother, though I love her dearly, still believes that the locating of special needs children in my daughter's school takes away from her getting a "fair" education. The handicapped kids get all the attention and my daughter ends up not learning. I have to disagree with her.

For being allowed to see people as individuals and not as handicapped my daughter has learned many things. Kindness, tolerance and acceptance of people not for what they can or can't do but for who they are inside.

As for me, I have learned to step out from behind the two-way mirror and face my own fears of being labelled "different." The unique gifts each one of us brings to this world should never be hidden away. Being different is no handicap. Being segregated is.

Nancy Bennett is a writer who lives in Victoria, B.C.

The tree

I am a tree
growing in the wilderness.
A Scotch Pine, actually,
a descendant of a tree
that immigrated to Canada
and took.

In the spot where I grew up
the wind of opposition
always blew
from the same direction.

So now
my branches
are longer on one side
than on the other.

Although I am somewhat stunted
in my growth
my roots are deep
and reach down to
ever-flowing waters.

So
wherever
the wind blows from
it won't uproot me.
I may bend
under the gale
for a time
but God will silence the stormwinds
that rage and toss me about.
Now
I will stand straight
once more.

Michèle Gyselinck
Sherbrooke, Que.

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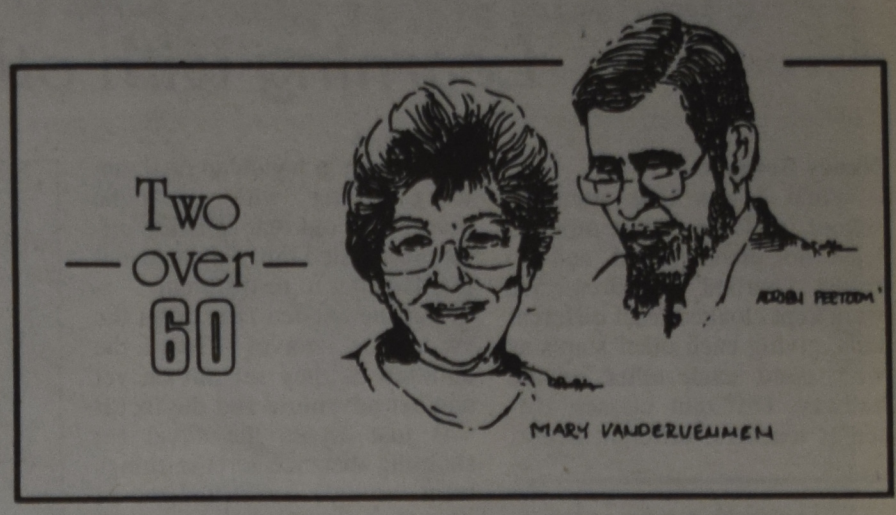
Comment

How can Christians witness in a radically different culture?



Dear Mary,

Johanna and I have returned after four months of living in the Netherlands and a 65-day trip through European and Asian seas as passengers on a container ship. We're glad to be home — maybe! We enjoyed ourselves so much, and learned a lot of unusual things.

On our return, CC indicated that it would like us to resume our correspondence column. So here is the re-start opener. Of course vivid memories of our trip will linger for a while, so I hope that you and our readers won't mind that I begin with a reflection based on two such memories.

This is the first. Johanna and I stood on a very busy intersection in Shanghai (China) watching hundreds of bikes and scooters on either side waiting for the light to turn green. When it did, all the bikes and scooters moved at once. Few stuck to the right side of the road. They all individually chose the path that suited them.

Collisions? Not a one, though there was a lot of veering at the last possible moment. Plus bells, whistles and scooter hoots. Amazing! Later we saw the same thing at another intersection, this time with cars and large motorcycles participating as well.

It was at that intersection that this thought hit me: "Suppose my denomination had sent me out to be a missionary in this city. What is it that I would say to these people?" And the immediate answer I gave myself stunned me then, and still disturbs me now. The truth is, I would have nothing to say to them, certainly not in the short run.

Guilt about that answer engulfed me immediately. A blatant disregard of "Make disciples of all nations....(Matt. 28:19)?" Cowardice? Perhaps. But also reading memories of 19th century missionary activity, which in retrospect was so much blatant colonialism that genuine Christian gospel-spreading is hard to find now. We don't want to make the mistakes of our forebears again, do we, who disregarded the culture of their missionary objects, their forms of spirituality, their histories, their being already worthy in the eyes of God even if they didn't worship like Christians? So what would I do there?

My unrest then (and still now) also had roots in the friendship I developed with the Second Mate on board of the ship. The second time we met he told me, with some emphasis, that he was an atheist ("but he hoped he was a 'good man' and he had nothing against Christians"). Born in East Germany in 1946, he had been raised and educated under Communist rule. Perhaps he learned his atheism there, perhaps he turned away from the church he saw as ineffective.

My problem became the fact that this atheist was the kindest and most interesting officer on board, also the most level-headed and well-adjusted, the only German officer truly respectful of the Philippine crew, perceptive about what drove the ship he was on ("not fuel, but money, money, money!"), and also full of compassion for young people everywhere who have difficulty finding meaningful work (his 23-year-old son, for instance). I never found the words to tell him about what Jesus might mean in his life either, though I thought about it.

What I did on board was develop my friendship with him, as he did with me. I hope he and his wife (we met her as well when she came on board for a few days) will be our future guests for a few weeks. I felt inspired by this man, and still do. But as for preaching the gospel to him? I don't have the words.

Love,
Adrian

P.S.
I look forward to your next letter on "predestination and human responsibility!"

Dear Adrian,

Welcome back! I'm sure your trip was absolutely unforgettable, and that you will be digesting it for many months to come. It's good to know that oldsters like us can do something so unusual that it forces us to question some of the things we took for granted all our lives. A little shaking up is good for the soul, we've found.

Your memory of Shanghai reminds me of the two months Bob and I spent in Chengu, China, teaching English. I remember well the graceful ballet of bicycles, cars and rickshas in busy intersections, along with some heart-stopping moments crossing the streets. "Just keep moving" our students told us as we entered the dance.

But your question of Christian witness in a radically different culture is an important one. We North Americans have come to realize the day is past that we can confidently preach to people who don't know the gospel as we know it without respectfully living alongside them and genuinely trying to understand their history and culture. We found in our Chinese students many deeply honorable, even biblical characteristics: incredible generosity, devotion to family, respect and love for us their teachers. Not notably North American values!

The curriculum we taught (designed by people at the English Language in China agency under whose auspices we went) was designed to encourage discussion about values in China and in the West, one of the values being religion. Part of our task as a team of teachers was to dramatize some North American festivals like Thanksgiving, Fourth or First of July, Christmas, Easter.

For the Easter festival we dramatized without extra-biblical comment the Good Friday-Easter story. The next day in class one of my brightest students said, "I want you to tell us what you believe." Wow! I said I believed that God made the world, that he made China, that he loved the world and all the people in it including them. And I quoted John 3:16. It was profoundly moving to me to say those familiar words in a Chinese classroom.

Our students had many questions and we had many talks. The fascinating thing to me was that those students who took it seriously (not all of them did) realized that if they were to believe the gospel it would affect every area of their lives. It would be a worldview shakeup like they had never experienced before. The gospel, I realized, still has the power to cut to the heart of life.

I could write pages about our time there, but for now I just want to affirm your question about how we present the gospel. I have enormous respect for the "tent-making" people who spread the gospel by living and working respectfully yet uncompromisingly among the people they want to reach. There is a lot of North American and Western baggage we need to disown, and that requires some humility and soul-searching on our part. As obviously was brought home to you in Shanghai and with your new friend, God bless him!

On our return from China I did some reading. I always find it more meaningful to read about a place after I've been there more than before I go. Anyway, back in the early 1400 or 1500s, I believe, there was a Catholic priest who lived and worked with some notable success in China for the better part of his life. He learned the language and established a community. He penetrated the highest levels of society because he had the skill of clock-making which caught the emperor's interest. However the Catholic Church back home felt he was not "Catholic" enough and recalled him. It's interesting to speculate on how Chinese history might have been different if he could have stayed and worked with church support.

Is this a time to talk about the relationship between human activity and predestination?

Just wondering,
Mary

We welcome Adrian home from his travels and the resuming of the "Two over 60" column. Adrian Peetoom is a retired educational editor who lives in Waterloo, Ont., and Mary Vander Vennen is a retired therapist who lives in Toronto.

Two weeks that were

Bert Hielema

HERE IS A GOOD START for this week: I came across a saying by an old Indian sage: "My son, three things in life are real: God, human stupidity and laughter. Since the first two pass our comprehension; we must do what we can with the third." I wholeheartedly agree. I often see the comical, even in human stupidity, which, unfortunately, is always in good supply. Laughter is also excellent therapy, the best possible medicine, with no side effects. But it's contagious.

SO WHAT STUPID things have I located this time?

What is there to laugh about now? In these days of political correctness, I have to be careful. The range of matters I publicly may poke fun at is becoming limited. However, since I am a man, I can joke about my half of the human race. So here's a tame one.

Question: how many men are needed to wallpaper a room? Answer: it depends how thin you slice them.

BACK TO REAL LIFE: television: which is the real thing for most people. I find TV hilarious because so much of it is so utterly phoney. I find most shows almost totally stupid to the point of being ridiculous. Ever looked how men are portrayed in TV ads? Make a point of it next time you watch.

Here is something I would find funny if it were not so sad: In a new book by Harvard professor Juliet Schor, *The Overspent American*, an intriguing statistic emerges. Controlling for age, income and other variables that affect savings, Schor estimates that each hour of television watching per week reduces a family's annual savings by $208.

Why? Where in earlier times the very best minds in painting, sculpture, architecture were employed by the church, now the cream of creative talent is used to entice us to buy-buy-buy. With an average viewing time of 30 hours per week, a "normal" family spends $6,000 each year on useless junk and keeping up with the Joneses, thanks to TV.

Since our family has said bye-bye to the tube well before our family grew up, we never were inclined to buy-buy. A saying comes to mind that applies to our family: in this life they laugh longest who laugh last. I hope you are among those as well who are laughing all the way to the bank.

NOW TO COMPUTERS. I find the Y2K problem one big joke. You may remember that the symbol Y2K means Year 2000 and applies only to computers. A quick refresher: computers indicate in their memory a year by their last two digits: thus 1998 is stored as 98. When 2000 comes along, the 00 will be seen as 1900 and this brings all sorts of problems because computers cannot think.

I don't worry about my own desk top and laptop, electric shaver or VCR, but I do worry about computers in nuclear power plants, in banks and hospitals and airplanes.

Here is what I pulled from the Net. I summarize: The Y2K is such a big problem that it equals the confusion caused by the Tower of Babel.

A certain Dr.Edward Yardeni, a chief economist at a big New York Bank, says, "Think of the computer as the rivets of our economy. It will be as difficult to fix the year 2000 bug as trying to change all the rivets on the *Titanic*." (Faulty rivets were reportedly the cause of the quick sinking of the *Titanic*).

What is the problem? When a computer which has been made ready for the year 2000 is in touch with one that isn't, it either shuts down or destroys the original repair. That is one problem. An even bigger conundrum are the 25 billion chips embedded in computers, cars, anything mechanical: fax machines, watches, robots, machine tools; the list is endless. Nobody knows how many are "year 2000" ready. Each chip must be found and replaced by hand. If they are over three years old, they probably cannot be replaced.

Says one report I read: "There is the distinct possibility that this computer glitch could cause a worldwide economic depression that lasts a decade." The report mentions how the National Power Grid — the electricity which makes this computer work — is the most important system at risk. If it goes down because of programming errors, society stops functioning. And having seen Ontario Hydro operate its nuclear plants, I will not be a bit surprised if this happens. I think that the saying "the chips are down" will get a totally new meaning after 1999.

DONT'T THINK THAT in this case I have a chip on my shoulder. Not me. You may wonder why I find this a laughing matter. Well, humanity, in its arrogance, has built a new system, has become totally dependent on it, and now it just may backfire and bring contemporary life to a temporary standstill.

A few nights ago while Net surfing I came across a very recent report by the British Parliamentary Committee on Science and Technology. In it the British Bankers Association states that "it is difficult to exaggerate the scale of the impact on banks and through them on the U.K. economy if they and their customers and counterparts abroad are not year 2000 compliant."

THE YEAR 2000 will come. The deadline cannot be moved up until we are ready. Windows 98 which is supposed to come out in a few weeks, was originally called Windows 97. That sort of software can be postponed. Not the January 1, 2000, deadline. Joshua called upon God to stop the sun. Bill Gates is powerful, but his faith is probably not as strong. The worldwide context is especially dangerous. The U.S. may be ready, but will Russia be? Will China? Already there is a great shortage of skilled people. Some of the to be corrected software is so old that the programmers have long retired or are dead. There even is a 9999 problem.

Computers may see the ninth day of the ninth month — September — 1999 as the end code and shut down. Then there is... forget it! There is so much that I'll come back to it later. Just a warning not to fall asleep. I talked to somebody who is planning to celebrate Dec.31, 1999-Jan. 1, 2000 in Las Vegas. Good luck. I wouldn't venture away from my house for anything on that night. I will keep you posted and will mention some precautions you must take.

AND NOW FOR THE good news, the really, unbelievably good news. For $35 you can buy a book called *The Roaring 2000s: Building the Wealth and Lifestyle You Desire in the Greatest Boom in History*. Just what we need in the next decade. Most economists fidget just trying to predict what Alan Greenspan will do with interest rates in a few weeks, but this man eagerly pegs stock prices a decade in the future. He predicts that the Dow Jones Average of 30 leading U.S. stocks, now around 9,000 will soar as high as 35,000 in 10 years time, averaging a gain of 18 per cent compound. Only in the year 2023 will there come a depression.

Oh, yes, another piece of advice from the author, Harry S Dent: small town real estate is the place to be. That makes sense. Welcome to Tweed!

BOOKS. I DON'T BUY them all, but I do read a lot of reviews. For only $33.95 plus tax, you can buy *The Twentieth Century*. It also comes with a subtitle: *The Explosion in Environmental Allergies — From Sick Buildings to Multiple Chemical Sensitivity*.

This book maintains that the chemical soup we consume in the form of what we drink, breathe and eat gives about 15 per cent of the population one or more forms of sickness such as respiratory diseases, immune disorders and simple fatigue. That, in addition to those already in hospitals because of side affects of drugs, estimated at effecting 20 per cent of people. No wonder doctors are in short supply: too many sick people.

THERE IS A connection between music and plants. A carefully controlled experiment at Berkeley University in California shows that plants respond to certain music and flourish. Plants exposed to Bach's works piped in through loudspeakers grew faster than those grown in silence. Plants actually embraced — twined themselves around — the speakers. The same plants, usually geraniums or beans, withered when exposed to a 24-hour rock station and grew away from the speakers as though blasted by gales. That is what I call good news, because what is good for plants is good for us. What is bad for plants is bad for us. Listen to Johann Sebastian and flower!

THERE IS A CAR called The Prius Hybrid Vehicle. In Latin "prius" means "before." In the automotive world the Toyota Prius is definitely before its time. This amazing car uses both gasoline and an electric motor as power sources, and through continuously switching back and forth from gasoline to electric power achieves maximum efficiency.

By using the momentum of the car when going downhill and by other means, no other battery charging is ever needed. With much greater mileage — as much as 30 km per litre — it will be the cleanest car on the market. They will be for sale — in Japan only — in December, and here in a few years. Good News for those who drive and love the environment.

Bert Hielema will probably buy a Prius when it is marketed in North America. I have heard that the estimated selling price is only $17,000 (US), about $25,000 (Cdn.)

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(Revised February 1, 1995)

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Birthdays	$40.00

All other one-column classified advertisements: $15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is $15.00, Letter under file number $35.00 extra. Photos: $25.00 additional charge.

Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive

ATTENTION!

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.,

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Christian Courier* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. *Christian Courier* reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of $15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS

We offer a one-year subscription for only $25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose $25.00 and the couple's correct address.

Christian Courier
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
Phone: (905) 682-8311
Fax: (905) 682-8313

E-mail: ccadverts@aol.com

Teachers

VICTORIA, B.C.: Pacific Chr. School requires a **Secondary French teacher** for the 98/99 school year. Teachers must be certifiable by the B.C. College of Teachers. Please send letter of application, resume, pastor's reference and statement of faith to:

John Mésselink,
Secondary Principal
Pacific Chr. School
654 Agnes St.
Victoria, BC V8Z 2E6
Phone: (250) 479-4532
Fax: (250) 479-3511

Thank You

DEKOTER:

We are overwhelmed, not only with the Lord's blessings but also with the many, many cards, handshakes and well-wishes which we received on our 60th wedding anniversary. We want to express our sincere thanks to all for the many tokens of your interest. Let's together praise and thank the Lord for His goodness.

P. and S. DeKoter, Brampton, Ont.

Births

HOYTEMA:

God has blessed our family with the birth of a healthy, beautiful baby boy! We praise Him for

JONATHAN PETER

born to George and Tammy Hoytema (and big brother Jacob) on March 7, 1998, weighing 7 lbs., 8 oz. Delighted grandparents are Charley Hoytema, Janet and Henry Katerberg, and Terry and Donna Nield.
Address: 565 College Ave., Orangeville, ON L9W 4S3

Birthdays

VANDERHILL:

With thanksgiving to God for His faithfulness in the life of our mother

JEAN (JANTJE) VANDERHILL

we celebrate her 85th birthday on May 23, 1998.

Ron & Gerry Fisher — Carrying Place
Robert & Inez Vanderhill — Dorchester
Diane & George Roorda — Tallahassee, Fl.
Herman & Ina Vanderhill — London
Jerry Vanderhill — Sarnia

With love from the children, 17 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Please join us at the open house for best wishes on May 23, 1998, from 2-3:30 p.m., at Westmount Chr. Ref. Church in Strathroy, Ont.
Home address: 43 Clarence St., Strathroy, ON N7G 1H2

Personal

ONE TO ANOTHER

Christian companion magazine.
Hundreds of readers Canada-wide.
Single issue $5.
Write to:
#12 923 2nd Ave. S.
Lethbridge, AB T1J 0C7

Marriages

DE KONING/KOSKINEN:

Mr. and Mrs. Jan and Jane de Koning are glad to announce the wedding of their daughter

ALICE JANE
to
YRJÖ JUHANI

son of Mr. and Mrs. Jouko and Mirja Koskinen. They speak their vows before God and His people on Saturday, June 6, 1998, at 2 p.m., in the Willowdale Chr. Ref. Church, 70 Hilda Avenue, Willowdale, Ont.

Psalm 121:7,8, is their and our guide: "The Lord will keep you from all harm — He will watch over your life; The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore."

Reception follows in the fellowship hall of the church.

RUPKE/VAN FAROWE:

To God be the glory.

Ron and Margaret Rupke and Jim and Joan Van Farowe are pleased to announce the upcoming wedding of their children

ROXANNE JOY RUPKE
and
JAMES LOREN VAN FAROWE

The marriage will be celebrated on Saturday, June 6, 1998, at 2:30 p.m., in Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church, Woodbridge, Ont.

Summer address: 105 Fitzhugh Ave., Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

Vacation

Luxury Collingwood Condominium

2 bdrm., sleeps 7, fully equipped, TV, VCR, stereo, dishwasher, fireplace, A/C. Swimming, cycling, hiking, tennis, golf and more! $600/wk, $300/wkend. **Call (905) 877-0408**, or **386-6976 (St. Catharines, Ont)**. (No smoking, no pets).

Teachers

AGASSIZ, B.C.: Teaching position at Agassiz Chr. School, Sept. 1998 - June 1999. Grade 3/4 class of 15 students. Qualifications: Committed Christian, certifiable with B.C. College of Teachers, interest/expertise in physical education/coaching, computer literate.

Agassiz Chr. School
Box 3230
Agassiz, BC V0M 1A0
Fax: (604) 796-9519

Anniversaries

On May 24, 1998, the Lord willing,

RAY and WILLY HOITING

will be celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary.

"Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations" (Ps. 90:1).

May God continue to bless you Dad and Mom!

Love from:
Linda & Tony Jeronimus — Brighton
Jonathan, Josh, Tim, Tara
Coby Hoiting — Scarborough
Brian & Veronica Hoiting — Mississauga
Raymond, Daniel, Nolan, Aaron, Conner
Brenda & Ed Selke — Lac La Biche
Stephen, David, Rachel
Richard & Carla Hoiting — Stoney Creek
Jordan, Nicholas, Vashti, Nathaniel, Jessica
Liz & Colin Elkin — Pointe au Baril
Rayissa

To celebrate this event, we invite friends and family to an open house reception to be held, D.V., on Saturday, May 23, 1998, from 4-6 p.m., at the Fruitland Chr. Ref. Church, 805 Hwy. #8.

Home address: 37 Glenhollow Dr., Stoney Creek, ON L8J 3R5
Phone: (905) 578-5150

Teachers

OAKVILLE, Ont.: Oakville Chr. School, an interdenominational Chr. school (JK-8) invites teaching applications for a **definite opening in Grade 1.** Applicants must have a minimum of 5 years teaching experience in Grade 1 or equivalent.

If you would like to be part of a dynamic Christian staff, please send your letter of application and resume with references to:

Search Committee
c/o Oakville Chr. School
112 Third Line, Oakville, ON
L6L 3Z6
Fax: (905) 825-3398

PRINCE GEORGE, B.C.: Cedars Chr. School is accepting applications for their newly-established high school. Cedars is a denominationally diverse community consisting of 315 K-12 students.

Interested applicants may forward their resume and educational philosophy to:

Mr. Brian Kenna, Board Chairman
Cedars Chr. School
701 N. Nechako Rd.
Prince George, BC V2K 1A2

Anniversaries

1958 June 4 1998

With grateful hearts we thank the Lord for the blessings He has given our parents

BEN and JENNY MOEDT
(nee HAAGEN)

We rejoice with them on the celebration of their 40th wedding anniversary.

Ronald Moedt — Maple Ridge, B.C.
Marvin & Denise Moedt — Abbotsford, B.C.
Erik, Jasper, Nadine, Sasha
Nora & Bruce Wisselink — Ardrossan, Alta.
Amy, Karyn, Megan, Jason
Carla & James Feltz — Silverdale, Wash.
Alexa

Congratulations may be sent to: 21520-124 Ave., Maple Ridge, BC V2X 4H3

"For he who finds me, finds life and obtains favor from the Lord" (Prov.8:35).

On May 28, 1998,

LUCAS and ELSIE NOORDHOF
(nee OTTEN)

hope to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary. We give glory and thanks to God for the blessing you have been to each other and to us. Congratulations and best wishes for many more years together!

Love,
Margaret & Rich Grift — Brantford, Ont.
Janita, Lydia, Jesse
Anita & Mark Croswell — Strathroy, Ont.
Christopher, Rachael

Address: 437 Drury Lane, Strathroy, ON N7G 3G2

Teachers

FRUITLAND, Ont: Fruitland John Knox Memorial Chr. School invites applications for a **37.5 per cent part-time Administrative Relief Teacher** for the 1998-1999 school year. The ideal candidate will possess a valid provincial or state teacher certificate, a Christian School Teacher Certificate (CSTC) and have a few years of successful teaching experience in Grade 6 to 8.Persons interested in this position should contact **Mr. J. de Jager, Principal, at (905) 643-2460** in order to receive application forms. Applications will be received until the position has been filled.

Send your questions to
Peter and Marja.
Confidentiality assured.

Classifieds

Obituaries

Holten Jarvis
the Neth. Ont.
Feb. 10, 1929 - May 7, 1998

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" (Ps.27:1a). The Lord called unto Himself from her home on Thursday, May 7, 1998,

GEERTRUI (TRUDY) STAM
(nee LANDEWEERD)

Beloved wife of Dick Stam.
Dear mother of:
John & Sharon Stam — Jarvis
Annette & John Stegenga — Jarvis
Harry & Pam Stam — Jarvis
Debbie & George Muizelaar — Smithville
Loving grandmother of 18 grandchildren and great-granddaughter Kylie.
Predeceased by granddaughter Cheryl-Lee.
Sister of Riek, Janny, Johanna and the late Dieks and Heiltje. Sister-in-law of Henny Landeweerd and Teun Beltman, all of the Netherlands.
The funeral service was held at Ebenezer Chr. Ref. Church, Jarvis, Ont., on Saturday, May 9, 1998, with Pastor Jeff Janssen officiating. Interment at Knox Presbyterian Church Cemetery.
Correspondence address: Mr. Dick Stam, R.R. #1, Jarvis, ON N0A 1J0

Miscellaneous

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Church News

Christian Reformed Church

Available for call:
— The council of Hope CRC of Port Perry, Ont., recommends **Pastor Ken Van Schelven** to the churches of our denomination. Rev. Van Schelven may be contacted at 1-205 Chestnut St. E., Whitby, ON L1N 2Y1; Phone (905) 665-9565.

New address:
— **Rev. Wayne Ten Harmsel**, 4904 - 44th St., Barrhead, AB T7N 1J4. Phone (403) 674-2629, e-mail: Harmsel@telus-planet.net

New Stated Clerk:
— New Stated Clerk for Classis Huron, effective June 1, 1998: **Mr. Herman Jonker**, 108 Erinbrook Dr., Kitchener, ON N2F 3C4. Phone: (519) 570-9465 or Fax: (519) 570-9465 (call first).

Emeritation:
— Trinity CRC of Abbotsford, B.C., announces the emeritation of **Pastor Gerrit Veeneman** as a result of his physical disability. We deeply thank God for his years of faithful service to the Lord Jesus at Trinity and in the denomination. Please join us in wishing him and his family God's continued blessing in the years to come.

Please note the following e-mail addresses for Christian Courier:

Bert Witvoet — Editor: cceditor@aol.com
Marian Van Til — Associate Editor: cceditor2@aol.com
Alan Doerksen — Journalist: ccjournal@aol.com
Stan de Jong — Manager: ccjournal@aol.com
Grace Bowman — Subscriptions: ccsubscrip@aol.com
Ingrid Torn — Advertising: ccadverts@aol.com

Job Opportunities

Youth Director

Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church of Cambridge, Ont., is prayerfully seeking a non-ordained Youth Director for its youth programs. This is a new half-time position. Please apply in writing and in confidence **by June 25, 1998**, (include a brief statement of personal faith with your application) to: **Youth Director Search Committee, Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church, c/o Brent Miedema, 49 Woodland Dr., Cambridge, ON N1R 2X7**, Canada. **Phone: (519) 623-5715**. A detailed job description is available by calling the above telephone number.

Administrative Assistant

Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church of Cambridge, Ont., is prayerfully seeking a qualified individual to carry out various administrative duties within the church office and congregation. This is a new half-time position. Please apply in writing and in confidence **by June 25, 1998**, to: **Administrative Assistant Search Committee, Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church, c/o Brent Miedema, 49 Woodland Dr., Cambridge, ON N1R 2X7**, Canada. **Phone: (519) 623-5715**. A detailed job description is available by calling the above telephone number.

Job Opportunities

Edmonton Christian Schools

Northeast Campus has a **full-time Teacher Assistant position** for a Christian adult willing to meet the challenge of integrating a multiple disabled boy (into a Grade 7 classroom). Send your resume to: **Mrs. T. Fernhout, Edmonton Christian School - Northeast Campus, 13470 Fort Road, Edmonton, AB T5A 1C5.**

Closing date: June 5, 1998.

Miscellaneous

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Our Circulation Manager is at her job every day trying to keep our subscriptions up to date. We spend thousands of dollars each year in postage sending out renewal notices, reminders, etc. To top it off, Canada Post charges us an extra fee for using the handy business-reply envelopes we make available. **This means that in order to get a subscription renewed we have to pay close to $1.00 in postage alone!**

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❑ three-year renewal. Enclosed is $123.00 ($99.00 U.S.)

Name _____
Address _____
City/Town _____
Code _____

P.S. If possible, glue your label in this space, or enclose it. Send to: **4-261 Martindale Road, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1**

Classifieds

Job Opportunities

Executive Assistant/Sales Support

Our importing company requires an energetic person to co-ordinate all internal functions for our Mississauga, Ont., office and showroom.
In addition to Business Diploma or sales exposure, you have well-developed interpersonal, communication, and organizational skills. You enjoy a challenge, are innovative, and work very well without supervision. MS Word and Excel experience preferred.
Please send resume to **Globe Hotelware Agency Inc., c/o Bert Knol, 2169 Headon Road, Burlington, ON L7M 3W7**

Job Opportunities

Director of Youth Ministries

The Second Chr. Ref. Church of Brampton, Ont., will have a position available in Sept. 1998, for a full-time **Director of Youth Ministries**. We are looking for a person with the gifts and skills to lead an established youth program. It includes working in a team environment with our Pastor, youth elders and other leaders. We seek a person committed to help our youth serve the Lord. Both ordained or un-ordained persons with university education are invited to apply. Full job description and church profile available. Please send your letters of interest to the **Clerk of Council, Mr. Jim Visser, 3 Trotters Lane, Brampton, ON L6Y 1B8.**

Miscellaneous

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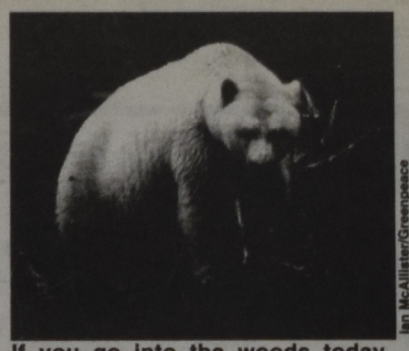
Miscellaneous

GREENPEACE
Green Kids

CAN YOU "BEAR" IT?

(NC)—On the west coast of Canada there is a large forest which is home to three different kinds of bears (which is how the forest came to be called, "The Great Bear Rainforest"). The three bears are the Grizzly bear (the largest bear found in British Columbia), the Black bear (which has the biggest population) and the Kermode or spirit bear, which is actually a member of the black bear species that is all white.



Ian McAllister/Greenpeace

If you go into the woods today, you're in for a big surprise! NC

If you would like a free copy of "Endangered Zone, Living on the Edge, Canada's Species at Risk," please write: Greenpeace Information Office, 250 Dundas St. West, Suite 605B, Toronto, Ontario M5T 2Z5.

Miscellaneous

What do church pews know?

In his new book, ***Along the Timber Line***, Bill Moody has a unique way of highlighting some pertinent church concerns. The reader will be challenged with the "Timbre of Truth" portrayed by Jack Pine, Mary Maple, Oscar Oak, Sally Cedar and others in the 12 chapter titles, such as: "Why Go To Church?" — "Say It With Music" — "It's In The Book" — "Take Me To Your Leader" — "The Other Rib!"
Send $5.95, plus $1.50 for mailing, to Rev. W.H. Moody, 413-3097 Palmer Drive, Burlington, ON L7M 4G8

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Classifieds

Events

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

May 22 - 24 "Caring for God's Creation," a conference on faith and the environmental professional, featuring Dr. Calvin DeWitt and Dr. Fred Van Dyke. At The King's University College, **Edmonton**, Alta. Info.: (403) 465-8304, fax (403) 465-3534. E-mail: jmathis@kingsu.ab.ca (#)

May 23-24 "Tulips & Roses," a concert by the "Amati" Mandolin Orchestra (The Hague, The Netherlands), Hamilton's "The Ambassadors Male Choir," and the Welland Mandolin Orchestra. **May 23**: 8 p.m., Sir John A. MacDonald High School (York & Bay), **Hamilton**, Ont.; **May 24**: 2 p.m., Centennial Secondary School, Thorold Rd., **Welland**, Ont. Info.: (905) 389-2104. (#)

May 24 Dutch worship service led by Rev. Allan C. Groen, 3 p.m., Calvin CRC, 1475 Merivale Rd., **Nepean**, Ont. Also featuring several musicians and a male chorus. Info.: (613) 224-1328. (#)

May 27 "Hollandse Dag," 10 a.m., CRC, **York,** Ont. Meditation by Rev. P. Van Egmond. (#)

May 27 Harpsichord and Baroque Oboe recital by Jonathan Oldengarm and Naomi Struik, noon, St. Andrews Presb. Church, **Kitchener**, Ont. Info.: (519) 338-3214.

May 28 40th Anniversary of the Bethel Chr.Ref. Church, **Dunnville**, Ont. Former members are welcome to attend the special thanksgiving worship service on **May 31**. Info.: (905) 774-7285. (#)

May 29-31 Singles Conference at Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. Theme: "Hope Set High." For info. and brochure call (905) 387-1628. (#)

May 30 CPJ's 1998 annual meeting, 7 p.m., 229 College St., **Toronto**, Ont. Keynote by Gerald Vandezande on "The Scandal of Poverty and the Crises of Politics." Info.: (416) 979-2443.

May 31 Dutch worship service led by Rev. Harry A. Vander Windt, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster**, Ont.

June 6 Organ/harpsichord concert by Jonathan Oldengarm, 7:30 p.m., Benton Baptist Church, **Kitchener**, Ont. Info.: (519) 338-3214.

June 6 Fortieth anniversary celebration of the Calvary CRC, **Ottawa**, Ont. Special service on Sunday at 10 a.m. Info: (613) 821-1911. (#)

June 8-11 Eighth Annual 4-Day Evening Walk (Hikers' Festival). at the Royal Botanical Gardens, **Burlington**, Ont. Registration at RBG Centre each day at 4:30 p.m. For info. call Bill Haartman at (905) 383-6319.

June 10 "Hollandse Dag," 10 a.m., Community Centre, **Moorefield**, Ont. Info.: (519) 638-2053. (#)

June 10 "Hollandse Dag," 10 a.m., First CRC, **Kingston**, Ont. Speaker: Rev. Allan Groen. Info.: (613) 384-2493.

June 11 Noon-hour organ recital by Jonathan Oldengarm, St. Paul's Anglican (Bloor & Jarvis), **Toronto**, Ont. Info.: (519) 338-3214.

June 20 Timothy Chr. School (Etobicoke) celebrates its 40th anniversary! Open house at 4 p.m. at 28 Elmhurst Dr., **Etobicoke**, Ont. Social time (4 p.m.) and celebration dinner (6.15 p.m.) at Toronto District Christian High, 377 Woodbridge Ave., **Woodbridge**, Ont. Advance ticket sales only! Info.: (416) 741-5770. (#)

June 20 "Grunneger Picnic," 10 a.m., Grand River Conservation Authority Park, **Rockwood**, Ont. For info. contact Harry Klungel at (519) 235-0719.

June 21 A major 15-yr. retrospective art exhibition by George Langbroek which includes 50 etchings and drawings. At 2 p.m. at Rodman Hall Arts Centre, a national gallery located at 109 St. Paul Crescent, **St. Catharines**, Ont. Show continues till Sept.11. Info.: (905) 684-2925.

June 24 "Canadian Picnic" of the Lake Alfred Winter Ministry of Florida, 10 a.m., South Side Park, **Woodstock**, Ont. Info.: (519) 421-0431. (#)

June 24 Organ recital by Jonathan Oldengarm, 12:15 p.m., St. Paul's Cathedral, 472 Richmond St., **London**, Ont. Info.: (519) 338-3214.

June 27-28 Fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Community CRC (formerly First CRC), **Kitchener,** Ont. For info. call the church office at (519) 743-9482. (#)

July 13-31 ICS/Wycliffe-sponsored Summer School, 229 College St., **Toronto**, Ont. For more info. contact John Franklin at (416) 979-2331. Toll free 1-888-326-5347. E-mail: franklin@ultratech.net

Sept. 26 Toronto District Chr. High School 35th Anniversary Celebration Dinner! All friends of TDCH are invited to attend this event at the school, **Woodbridge**, Ont. Tickets $35, order through the school office beginning May 1, 1998. Tel. (905) 851-1772.

Oct.11 First CRC, **Owen Sound**, Ont. celebrates its 50th anniversary! Variety program on Friday. Homecoming tea/dinner on Saturday. Special service on Sunday. Info.: Linda DeBoer (519) 371-8192. (#)

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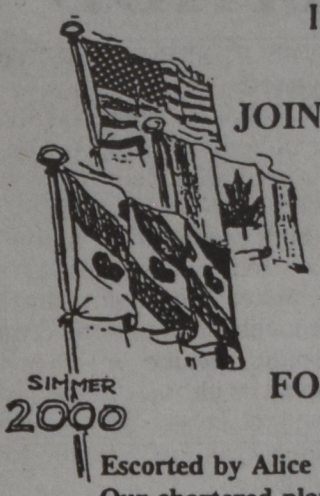

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News

Physician warns about unconventional treatments of ADD

Alan Doerksen

GRIMSBY, Ont. — Two U.S.-based companies are marketing nutritional supplements they claim to be effective treatment for Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) with no side-effects. But a Canadian family physician is skeptical and offers a "second opinion" about these treatments.

Reliv and Melissa Supreme are two products being marketed as non-drug treatments of ADD. Reliv was developed in 1988 by American microbiologist Dr. Theodore Kalogris. Since then, the Reliv company has developed many related products and gone international, opening its Canadian office in Mississauga, Ont., in 1992.

Reliv distributes its products through a network of private marketers such as Johanna Cupido, who is based in Calgary. According to Cupido, Reliv products have proven to be an effective treatment for ADD. She cites the results of a public study on Reliv's effects on ADD patients which was conducted by Dr. Kevin Horvath, a pediatrician in Tipp City, Ohio.

Horvath's study involved 40 children with ADD who were treated with Reliv Now and Innergize Nutritional supplements (both produced by Reliv). Over a four-week period, these children were put through a "double blind placebo controlled study," which involved treatment with the Reliv products and placebos (which were not identified as such to the patients).

All of these children had been previously taking the drug Ritalin as treatment for their disorder.

Milk allergy a problem

For the first two weeks of the study, the children were given the Reliv products or placebos as well as Ritalin. After that point, Ritalin dosage was decreased by 25 to 30 per cent while dosages of Reliv were continued and the results monitored.

In his results, Horvath writes: "Most of these ADHD [Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder]] children the author trialed on Reliv demonstrated remarkable improved behavior. However, a small handful became obviously worse.... The most likely cause of such an adverse reaction would be an allergic response, and the most likely allergen in Reliv Now or Innergize would clearly be the whey protein in Now. Milk is undoubtedly the most common dietary allergen."

Six children tested on Reliv products and four children on placebo reacted negatively, Horvath reported. He concluded, "It is the impression of this author that for children who are not milk allergic and who have been diagnosed with ADHD or ADD, a combination of Reliv Now and Innergize appropriately dosed can be of tremendous benefit."

Questions study methods

But Dr. Tom Zeyl, a family physician in Grimsby, Ont., questions the validity of these test results. "I can do a drug study and sell it to a drug company," he says. But for a medical product to be accepted by the medical community, research should be done by someone unconnected with the drug company, and the results should be published in a medical journal, he insists.

Zeyl is critical of the small number of people tested on Reliv products. Most such studies will test several hundred people, not only 40. Zeyl also notes that the testing involved Ritalin as well as Reliv, which he says is "drastically different" from using Reliv alone. Part of the test results are the withdrawal effect from Ritalin.

Also, the Reliv test did not have a "crossover," says Zeyl. This means exchanging Reliv for a placebo half way through testing for the test group, and recording the results. "A crossover study is the best kind to have," he asserts.

But he notes that the test was a double-blind study, which is obligatory for a new medical product. In such a study, the placebo must appear and taste identical to the real product.

Another criticism Zeyl has about Reliv is "it doesn't say exactly what's in it. That makes me a bit suspicious. I can't recommend it because I have no clue what's in it." And although Reliv products have been available for six years in Canada, Zeyl has never heard of them and "that makes me concerned."

He observes that products such as Reliv can be classified as foods, not drugs, and therefore are not subject to Canada's health and drug regulations.

Cupido says that Reliv products are not drugs but nutritional supplements. Because of this, unlike drug treatments for ADD, they have no side-effects, except possibly for those with milk allergies, she says.

Natural sources

Reliv describes its products as being made from natural foods such as vegetables, dried beans, vitamins, minerals, proteins and herbs. Some take the form of a powder that can be mixed into a drink and consumed, while other products include sports drinks and snack bars.

Deborah Schmelzer, of Pickering, Ont., sent a testimonial to Reliv's offices in March about her son's positive reaction to Reliv products. Ryan Schmelzer has ADD and started taking Reliv in May 1996.

A school psychologist recommended the Schmelzers try Ritalin instead, but later agreed with the fami-ly's decision to use Re liv, after several months of successful treatment with Reliv. Deborah Schmelzer writes, "Two years later, Ryan is an excellent student and is on his way to becoming a straight A student. Needless to say, we all use the Reliv products because we know the importance of balanced nu-trition in our diet." Deborah and her husband, Howie, now market Reliv products.

True success or vested interest?

The Reliv company produces several publications which show the support given to their products by various physicians and highlight the financial success stories of Reliv's private marketers in Canada and elsewhere.

Similarly, the company that produces Melissa Supreme has circulated an article which speaks very highly of its product. This article was published recently in *Health Search* newspaper, produced by Wilson Publications of Owensburg, Kentucky.

Zeyl maintains that "that article is like those infomercials on TV. It tells you everything wonderful."

Baptism banner

Margaretha Ysselstein of Woodstock, Ont., designed this baptism banner for her church. It features water for cleansing, the dove representing the Holy Spirit, a rainbow of promise and the Alpha and Omega, the Agnus Dei and Chi Rho symbols.

News Digest

Non-smoker wanted

CRICKLADE, Ireland — A man who advertised for a non-smoking female "gravemate" to share his cemetery plot in Ireland has been inundated with replies, reports the *Weekly Telegraph*.

Donal Bredin-Smith, a chiropodist, said that seven of the 23 women who responded were interested in spending time with him in this life as well as the next.

Bredin-Smith, 65, bought the double plot in 1994, when he was still married, intending his wife to occupy it. But after they divorced, he placed an ad in a local paper, seeking a gravemate. The ad specified, "Garlic eaters and smokers need not apply."

Patients won't sue

BALTIMORE — Lania D'Agostino, a busy Baltimore plastic surgeon, works in a dusty studio. She operates without anesthesia and without her clients' consent or a medical degree. It's not likely her patients will sue, and some would say they're real dummies.

D'Agostino makes her living improving the appearance of manhandled mannequins and creating new ones. Her shop looks like a cross between a warehouse and the laboratory of a mad scientist. Every nook and cranny is filled with lifeless models and plaster limbs, reports the *Baltimore Sun*.

Angelic custody battle

CAP-PELE, N.B. — An Acadian lobster town in New Brunswick is enmeshed in a custody battle over who owns the statue of an angel. It all started last fall when Emile Burke, "guardian" of the angel, repainted the base of the statue baby-blue. Some townsfolk objected to this, says the *Globe and Mail*.

"People were making fun of the color," says mayor Francis Goguen. The town hired someone to repaint the statue. But Burke was furious and plans to sue the town for custody of the statue.

The angel statue was first set up by a local church. When a truck crashed into it in 1947, the church could not afford to rebuild it and asked Burke's uncle to repair it. He did, and gained ownership of it. Later, he passed this on to his nephew, with responsibility to take care of the statue.